

REPORT

OF THE

Massachusetts

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION,

ON THE SUBJECT OF

SCHOOL HOUSES,

SUPPLEMENTARY

TO HIS

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

Boston:

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS.

.....

1838.

HON. MYRON LAWRENCE,
President of the Senate :

SIR:—I have the honor herewith to transmit to you, for the information of the Legislature, a Supplementary Report from the Secretary of the Board of Education on the subject of School Houses.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD EVERETT.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
29th March, 1838.

HON. MYRON LAWRENCE,
President of the Senate :

SIR:—I have the honor herewith to transmit to you, for the information of the Legislature, a Supplementary Report from the Secretary of the Board of Education on the subject of School Houses.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD EVERETT.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
29th March, 1838.

R E P O R T .

TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION :

Gentlemen,—

In the Report, which I lately submitted to you on the subject of our “common schools and other means of popular education,” I mentioned school-house architecture, as one of the cardinal points in the system, and I reserved the consideration of that topic for a special communication.

In my late tour of exploration, made into every county in the state, I personally examined or obtained exact and specific information, regarding the relative size, construction and condition of about eight hundred school-houses; and, in various ways—principally by correspondence—I have obtained general information respecting, at least, a thousand more.

As long ago as 1832, it was said by the Board of Censors of the American Institute of Instruction, that “if we were called upon to name the most prominent defects in the schools of our country,—that which contributes most, directly and indirectly, to retard the progress of public education, and which most loudly calls for a prompt and thorough reform, it would be the want of spacious and convenient school-houses.” As a general fact, I do not think the common, district, school-houses are better now, than when the above remark was written. I have, therefore, thought, that I could, at this time, in no other way, more efficiently subserve the interests of the cause in which we are engaged, than in bringing together and presenting under one view, the most essential points respecting the

structure and location, of a class of buildings, which may be said to constitute the household of education.

I do not propose to describe a perfect model, and to urge a universal conformity. It is obvious, that some difference in construction is necessary, according to the different kind of school to be kept. In each case, it must be considered, whether the school-room be that of an academy or of an infant school; whether it be in the city or in the country; for males or for females, or both; whether designed to accommodate many scholars or only a few; or, whether the range of studies to be pursued is extensive, or elementary only. The essentials being understood, the plan can be modified for adaptation to each particular case.

The school-houses in the state have a few common characteristics. They are, almost universally contracted in size; they are situated immediately on the road-side, and are without any proper means of ventilation. In most other respects, the greatest diversity prevails. The floors of some are horizontal; those of others rise in the form of an amphitheatre, on two, or, sometimes, on three sides, from an open area in the centre. On the horizontal floors, the seats and desks are sometimes designed only for a single scholar; allowing the teacher room to approach, on either side and giving an opportunity to go out or into the seat, without disturbance of any one. In others, ten scholars are seated on one seat, and at one desk, so that the middle ones can neither go out nor in without disturbing, at least, four of their neighbors. In others, again, long tables are prepared, at which the scholars sit face to face, like large companies at dinner. In others, the seats are arranged on the sides of the room, the walls of the house forming the backs of the seats, and the scholars, as they sit at the desks, facing inwards; while in others, the desks are attached to the walls, and the scholars face outwards. The form of school-houses is, with very few exceptions, that of a square or oblong. Some, however, are round, with an open circular area in the centre of the room, for the teacher's desk and a stove, with seats and desks around the wall, facing outwards, separated from each other by high partitions, which project some distance into the room, so that the scholars may be turned into these separate compartments, as into so many separate stalls. In no particular does chance seem

to have had so much sway as in regard to light. In many, so much of the walls is occupied by windows, that there is but little difference between the intensity and the changes of light within and without the school-room; while in some others, there is but one small window on each of the three sides of the house and none on the fourth. Without specifying further particulars, however, it seems clear that some plan may be devised, combining the substantial advantages and avoiding the principal defects of all.

In the Report, above referred to, it was observed, that "when it is considered, that more than five-sixths of all the children in the state spend a considerable portion of the most impressible period of their lives in the school-house, the general condition of those buildings and their influences upon the young stand forth, at once, as topics of prominence and magnitude. The construction of school-houses connects itself closely with the love of study, with proficiency, health, anatomical formation and length of life. These are great interests and therefore suggest great duties. It is believed, that in some important particulars, their structure can be improved, without the slightest additional expense; and that, in other respects, a small advance in cost would be returned a thousand fold in the improvement of those habits, tastes and sentiments of our children, which are so soon to be developed into public manners, institutions and laws and to become unchangeable history."

The subject of school-house architecture will be best considered under distinct heads.

VENTILATION AND WARMING.

Ventilation and warming are considered together, because they may be easily made to co-operate with each other in the production of health and comfort. It seems generally to have been forgotten, that a room, designed to accommodate fifty, one hundred, and, in some cases, two hundred persons, should be differently constructed from one, intended for a common family of eight or ten only. In no other particular is this difference so essential as in regard to ventilation. There is no such immediate, indispensable necessary of life, as fresh air. A man may live for days, endure great hardships,

and even perform great labors, without food, without drink, or without sleep ; but deprive him of air for only one minute, and all power of thought is extinct ; he becomes as incapable of any intellectual operation as a dead man, and in a few minutes more, he is gone beyond resuscitation. Nor is this all ;—but just in proportion as the stimulus of air is withheld, the whole system loses vigor. As the machinery in a water-mill slackens when the head of water is drawn down ; as a locomotive loses speed if the fire be not seasonably replenished ; just so do muscle, nerve, and faculty, faint and expire, if a sufficiency of vital air be not supplied to the lungs. As this Report is designed to produce actual results for the benefit of our children ; and as it is said to be characteristic of our people, that they cannot be roused to action, until they see the reasons for it, nor restrained from action when they do, I shall proceed to state the facts, whether popular or scientific, which bear upon this important subject.

The common, or atmospheric air, consists mainly of two ingredients, one only of which is endued by the Creator with the power of sustaining animal life. The same part of the air supports life and sustains combustion ; so that in wells or cellars, where a candle will go out, a man will die. The vital ingredient, which is called *oxygen*, constitutes only about twenty-one parts in a hundred of the air. The other principal ingredient, called *azote*, will not sustain life. This proportion is adapted, by omniscient wisdom, with perfect exactness, to the necessities of the world. Were there any material diminution of the oxygen, other things remaining the same, every breathing thing would languish and waste and perish. Were there much more of it, it would stimulate the system, accelerating every bodily and mental operation, so that the most vigorous man would wear out in a few weeks or days. This will be readily understood by all who have witnessed the effects of breathing exhilarating gas, which is nothing but this oxygen or vital portion of the air, sorted out and existing in a pure state. Besides, this oxygen is the supporter of combustion, and, were its quantity greatly increased, fire would hardly be extinguishable, even by water. But the vital and the non-vital parts of the air are wisely mingled in the exact proportions, best fitted for human utility and enjoyment ; and all

our duty is not to disturb these proportions. About four parts of the twenty-one of vital air are destroyed at every breath; so that, if one were to breathe the same air four or five times over, he would substantially exhaust the life-giving principle in it, and his bodily functions would convulse for a moment and then stop. As the blood and the air meet each other in the lungs, not only is a part of the vital air destroyed, but a poisonous ingredient is generated. This poison constitutes about three parts in a hundred of the breath thrown out from the lungs. Nor is it a weak, slow poison, but one of fatal virulence and sudden action. If the poisonous parts be not regularly removed, (and they can be removed only by inhaling fresh air,) the blood absorbs them, and carries them back into the system. Just according to the quantity of poison, forced back into the blood, follow the consequences of lassitude, faintness or death. The poisonous parts are called carbonic acid. They are heavier than the common air, and as the lungs throw them out at the lips, their tendency is to fall towards the ground or the floor of a room, and if there were no currents of the air, they would do so. But the other parts of the air, being warmed in the lungs and rarified, are lighter than the common air, and the moment they pass from the lips, their tendency is to rise upward towards the sky. Were these different portions of the air as they come from the lungs of different colors; we should, if in a perfectly still atmosphere, see the stream divided, part of it falling and part ascending. A circulation of the air, however, produced, out-of-doors by differences of temperature, and in our apartments by the motion of their occupants and by other causes, keeps the poisonous parts of the air, to some extent, mingled with the rest of it, and creates the necessity of occasionally changing the whole. Though the different portions of the air have the same color to the bodily eye, yet in the eye of reason their qualities are diametrically opposite.

Although there is but the slightest interval between one act of breathing and another, yet, in a natural state of things, before we can draw a second breath, the air of the first is far beyond our reach, and never returns, until it has gone the circuit of nature and been renovated. Such are the silent and sublime operations, going on day and night, without intermission, all round the globe, for all the myriads of

breathing creatures that inhabit it, without their notice or consciousness. But, perhaps some will suppose, that, in this way, the vital portion of the air, in process of time, will be wholly consumed or used up; or that the poisonous portion, thrown off from the lungs, will settle and accumulate, upon the earth's surface, and rise around us, like a flood of water, so high as eventually to flow back into the lungs and inflict death. All this may be done; not however in the course of nature, but only by suicidal or murderous contrivances. In the Black Hole of Calcutta, in the year 1756, one hundred and forty-six persons were confined to a room only eighteen feet square for ten hours; and although there was one aperture for the admission of air and light, one hundred and twenty-three had perished at the end of that time. Only twenty-three survived, and several of these were immediately seized with the typhus fever. In the Dublin Hospital, during the four years preceding 1785, out of seven thousand six hundred and fifty children, two thousand nine hundred and forty-four died, within a fortnight after their birth; that is, thirty-eight out of every hundred. The cause of this almost unexampled mortality was suspected by Dr. Clarke, the physician, who caused fresh air to be introduced by means of pipes, and during the three following years, the deaths were only one hundred and sixty-five out of four thousand two hundred and forty-three, or less than four in a hundred; that is, a diminution in the proportion of deaths of more than thirty-four per cent. Hence it appears, that, through a deficiency of pure air, in one hospital, during the space of four years, there perished more than twenty-six hundred children. In Naples, Italy, there is a grotto, where carbonic acid issues from the earth and flows along the bottom in a shallow stream. Dogs are kept by the guides who conduct travellers to see this natural curiosity, and, for a small fee, they thrust the noses of the dogs into the gas. The consequence is that the dogs are immediately seized with convulsions, and, if not released, they die in five minutes. But let us not cry, *Shame!* too soon on those who are guilty of this sordidness and cruelty. We are repeating every day, though in rather a milder fashion, the same experiment, except that we use children instead of dogs.

But why, in process of time, it may still be asked, is not the vital principle of the air wholly exhausted, and the vallies and plains of

the earth, at least, filled with the fatal one ? Again, Divine Wisdom has met the exigency in a manner fitted to excite our admiration and wonder. The vegetable world requires for its growth the very substance which the animal world rejects as its death ; and in its turn, all vegetable growth yields a portion of oxygen for the support of animal life. One flourishes upon that which is fatal to the other. Thus the equilibrium is forever restored ; or rather it is never disturbed. They exchange poison for aliment ; death for life ; and the elements of a healthful existence flow round in a circle forever. The deadly poison thrown from the lungs of the inhabitants of our latitudes, in the depths of winter, is borne in the great circuit of the atmosphere to the tropical regions and is there converted into vegetable growth ; while the oxygen, exhaled in the processes of tropical vegetation, mounts the same car of the winds, and in its appointed time revisits the higher latitudes.* Why should we violently invade this beautiful arrangement of Providence.

There is another fact, impossible to be overlooked in considering this subject. Who can form any just conception of the quantity of air, which has been created ? Science has demonstrated, that it is poured out between forty and fifty miles deep all round the globe. It was to prevent the necessity of our using it, *second-hand*, that it was given to us by skyfuls. Then, again, it is more liquid than water. It rushes into every nook and crevice and fills every unoccupied place upon the earth's surface. All the powers of art fail in wholly excluding it from any given space. We cannot put our organs of breathing, where some of it will not reach them. All we can do is to corrupt it, so that none but fatal or noxious air shall reach them. This we do. Now if the air were a product of human pains-taking ; if laborers sweated or slaves groaned to prepare it ; if it were transported by human toil from clime to clime, like articles of export and import, between foreign countries, at a risk of property and life ; if there were ever any dearth, or scarcity of it ; if its whole mass could be monopolized, or were subject to accident or conquest, then, economy might be commendable. But ours is a parsimony of the inexhaustible. We are prodigals of health, of which we have so little, and niggards of air of which we have so

* See Appedix A. and B.

much. In the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, there are eight hundred feet cubic measure to each apartment, for one patient only. In the Prison at Charlestown, one hundred and seventy-one and a half cubic feet are allowed to each prisoner's cell. In addition to this, free ingress and egress of the air is allowed, by means of apertures and flues in the walls. In the Penitentiary, erected at Philadelphia a few years since, thirteen hundred cubic feet were allowed to each prisoner, solitarily confined; while in some of our school-rooms, less than forty cubic feet is allowed to a scholar, without any proper means of ventilation; and in one case, a school has been constantly kept, for thirteen years, in a room which allows less than thirty feet of air to the average number of scholars, now attending it; and even this school-room, contracted as it is, is besieged by such offensive effluvia, that the windows are scarcely opened even in summer.

I know of but three causes, which can have led to these opprobrious results. In populous and crowded places, the price of land may have been thought to justify the use of small rooms for many scholars. But this can never have been even a pecuniary argument of any weight with a financial mind, for the ultimate public expense of the sickness and poverty engendered, would overbalance, a thousand fold, the requisite original outlay. Besides, even if there were limit and constraint horizontally, there can have been none perpendicularly.

A motive of some efficacy may have been felt in the increased expense of erecting a house of adequate size. This is a tangible motive. But how feeble is it, when compared with the health and comfort of children, their love of study and their consequent proficiency in it? Should a case of necessity actually arise, where children were obliged to undergo some privation, far better would it be to stint them in their clothes, their food or their fuel, than in their air. But in regard to school-houses which are built at the public expense, such a necessity never can occur. Besides, these considerations affect size only, not ventilation.

An economy of the air, which has once been warmed is the only remaining motive for using foul air. But if the warm air is saved the foul air must be breathed, for they are the same. For several years past, high ceilings have been strenuously recommended as a compro-

mise of the difficulty. But when the room is high, it is necessary, in the first place, to warm a much greater quantity of air, than is required for breathing, and when it has all been once breathed, it becomes as necessary to remove it and supply its place with pure air, as though the quantity had been small. Besides, pure air at a lower temperature will warm the human system more, than impure air at a higher. In our climate, a moderately low ceiling is preferable to a high one, because with such, a much larger portion of the air which we have been at the expense to heat, can be used.

But it is believed, that in the vast majority of cases, this habitual use of foul air is not the result of calculation but of oversight. And it is worthy of especial attention, that many of our school-rooms, where the greatest privation of healthful air is now suffered, were constructed originally with a large open fireplace, which was of itself a sufficient ventilator ; and that afterwards close stoves were introduced to overcome the coldness of the rooms, without any reflection, that what was gained in warmth and comfort, was lost in the purity of the atmosphere, and consequently in bodily health and mental vigor.

In regard to this most immediate of all the necessities of life, that arrangement would be perfect, which should introduce the life-sustaining air, just as fast as it should be wanted for breathing ; and, when breathed, should carry it off, not to be breathed again, until it should be renovated and purified in the laboratory of nature. If one washes himself in running water, he will never dip up the same water a second time. So should it be with the air we respire. An arrangement, producing this effect is perfectly practicable and easy. By examining a most valuable communication, placed at the end of this report, from Dr. Woodward, the superintendent of the Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, it will appear, that fifty persons will consume the entire body of air in a room, thirty feet square and nine feet high, in about forty minutes. If, however, the room be perfectly tight, the air, once respired, will be partially mingled with the whole mass of air in the room and will offer itself to be breathed again. What is wanted, therefore, is a current of fresh air flowing into the room, while a current of the respired air flows out of it ; both to be equal to the quantity required for the occupants. Under such circumstances, if there be but little motion in the room, the poisonous part of

the air will settle towards the floor as soon as it is cast from the lungs, while the other part of it, being raised almost to a blood heat in the lungs will rise to the ceiling. In the ceiling, therefore, should be an aperture for its escape. The carbonic acid will tend to flow out under the door or when it is opened. If the ceiling be concave or dome-shaped, only one aperture will be necessary ;—if horizontal and the room be large, several may be required. The number will depend upon the manner in which the room is heated. If the house be of one story only, the apertures will open into the attic. On the upper side of the aperture let a trap-door be hung, to be raised by a cord, running over a pulley, and coming down into the room, or, (which is more simple,) by wires, after the manner of house-bells. This door should be prevented from opening to a greater angle than eighty degrees, so that when the cord is loosened it will fall by its own weight and close the orifice. The door will be opened, more or less, according to the temperature of the weather and the degree of wind prevailing without, so as always to carry off the impure air just as fast as it is fouled by the lungs. Any person, by stepping into the open air and inhaling it for half a minute, can, on returning into the room, determine the state of the air within it. If the apertures through the ceiling open into the attic, the air can be let off, either through fan-windows at the ends, or through sky-lights ; or an opening can be made into the chimney and a flue carried up to its top. In the last case, the floor of the attic, immediately under the flue, should be plastered, or covered with something incombustible, to make it perfectly secure against cinders, coming down through the flue. If the building be two stories high, the apertures for ventilation in the lower story, instead of being in the upper ceiling of the room, should be in the side walls, next the ceiling and so ascend, by flues, through the walls of the second story until they open into the attic. Sliding dampers can be used, in order to open or close these lower orifices, so as to regulate the escape of air from the room. Where a school-house two stories in height has been built in disregard of the laws of health and life, the lower room may be ventilated by making apertures in its upper ceiling, next to the walls of the room, and carrying up flues through the second story in tight boxes, attached to the walls and opening into the attic through similar apertures in the upper

ceiling of the second story. These boxes will appear, in the second story, to be only casings of posts or pilasters, and will not materially disfigure the room.

The best apparatus for expelling foul air from a room consists in the proper means of introducing a supply of fresh warm air. Undoubtedly, the best mode of warming a room is to have a cellar under it, and to place a furnace in the cellar. Some place of storing wood seems indispensable for every school-house, and a cellar could ordinarily be dug and stoned as cheaply as a wood-house could be built. I suppose, also, that a school-house would be much less exposed to take fire from a furnace well set, than from a common fireplace or stove. But the great advantage of warming by a furnace is, that all parts of the room are kept at the same temperature. The air presses outward instead of inward, through every crack and crevice in door or window. No scholars are injured by being forced to sit in the vicinity of a stove or fireplace; nor is any part of the room encumbered by either. When the latter are used, many scholars, who sit in exposed situations, will spend half an hour a day and often more, in going to the fire to warm themselves; and, in addition to those, whose comfort requires them to go, idlers, from all sides of the house, will make it a rendezvous or halfway place, for visiting. With an unequal diffusion of heat in a school warmed by a stove, or fireplace, I believe it is always true, that diligent scholars will stay in their seats and suffer, while the lazy will go to the fire to drone. Some other advantages of setting a furnace in a cellar to warm a school, are mentioned in the excellent communication of Dr. Woodward, above referred to. Feet can be warmed or dried at the orifices for admitting the heated air from the furnace as well as at a stove. There may be two of these orifices, one for the boys and one for the girls. The setting of a furnace requires some skill and science. We often meet with a prejudice against furnaces, which belongs not to the furnaces themselves, but to the ignorance of those who set them. There seems to be no objection, except it be that of appearance, against setting the furnace so high in the cellar, as that its brick or soapstone top shall be on a level with the floor of the room and constitute a part of it.

If a common stove must be used for warming the room, then let

it be enclosed in a case of sheet iron, rising from the floor on three sides of the stove and bending over it ; not, however, so as to *close* over its top, but leaving an opening in the case greater or less, according to the size of the stove and of the room. The sides of the case should be two or three inches from the sides of the stove. The stove should stand on legs a few inches from the floor, and fresh air should be introduced from out-of-doors and conducted under the stove in a tube or trough, which, as it rises around the stove, will be warmed and enter the room through the opening in the case at the top. A slide in the tube or trough will regulate the quantity of air to be admitted. The sensations, experienced in a room into which the external air is directly introduced and warmed in its passage, belong to a class entirely distinct from those engendered by air warmed in the ordinary way. They will be grateful to the pupils and will promote elasticity and vigor of mind. It would be well to place the stove directly in the current of air caused by opening the door.

The common expedient of letting down windows from the top, so that the noxious air may escape and the vacuum be filled with the pure, accomplishes the object in a very imperfect and, at the same time, an objectionable manner. If there be any wind abroad, or, if there be a great difference in temperature, between the external air and the air of the room, the former rushes in with great violence and mingles with the heated and corrupted air, so that unless several room-fulls of air be admitted, a portion of that which has been rendered unfit for use, will still remain, while some that has been partially warmed will escape. But the greatest objection is that the cold air drops like a shower bath upon the scholars' heads ;—a mode which all agree in pronouncing unhealthful and sometimes dangerous.

Some school-rooms are heated by a common close stove, the front part of which is placed in the wall, so that the door, where the stove is filled, is in an entry, while the body of the stove is in the school-room. It depends on other circumstances, whether this arrangement is beneficial or injurious. Where the air which keeps up the fire in the stove is taken from an entry, it passes through the funnel and chimney and leaves the body of air in the room unchanged. This is no objection, provided the air in the room is changed

otherwise. But if no other provision is made for changing the air in the room, the draught of the stove becomes important for that purpose. And although this may involve the evil of drawing in just as much air through the crevices and openings as is carried off through the stove, yet it is a less evil, than that of stagnant air in the room. If, however, the room is warmed by introducing a current of air from without, which is heated in its passage, then the arrangement of feeding the stove in an entry is unobjectionable, and may, often, be very commodious.

If the room be so warmed that the air presses from within, outwards, the doors should be hung so as to open inwards; if, on the other hand, the room be warmed by a common stove or fire place, the external air will press inwards, and therefore the doors should be hung so as to open outwards. Where the school-room has been so faultily constructed, that a current of air blows directly upon a row of scholars, every time the door is opened, it should be re-hung or have a spring to prevent its being left open.

A thermometer should be kept in every school-room, and hung on the coolest side of it. The proper temperature should be determined by unchangeable laws; not by the variable feelings or caprice of any individual. Without a thermometer, if the teacher be habituated to live in the open air; if he be healthy, vigorous, and young; if he walk a mile or several miles to school; and especially, if he keep upon his feet during school hours, the scholars will be drilled and scolded into a resignation to great suffering from cold. If, on the other hand, the teacher lead a sedentary life; if his health be feeble; if he step into the school-room from a neighboring door, he will, perhaps unconsciously, create an artificial summer about himself, and subject the children to a perilous transition in temperature, whenever they leave his tropical regions. In this way, a child's lungs may get a wound in early life, which neither Cuba nor the South of France can ever afterwards heal. A selfish or inconsiderate master will burn a whole room-full of children during the chill, and freeze them during the fever of his own ague fits. They must parch or congeal, as he shivers or glows.

It should be remembered, also, that even the thermometer ceases to be a guide, except in pure air. When pure air enters the lungs

it evolves heat. Its oxygen carries on the process, (supposed to be combustion,) necessary for that purpose. This keeps our bodies warm. It is the reason why the blood remains regularly at a temperature of ninety-eight degrees, though the air by which we are surrounded rises to that heat but few times in a year. The air constantly supplies to the body, through the medium of the lungs, the heat which it is constantly abstracting by contact with its surface. But it is only through the agency of the oxygen or life-sustaining portion of the air, that this heat is supplied. A thermometer, however, is insensible to this difference. It will indicate the same degree of heat in azote, i. e., in that portion of the air which will not sustain life, as in oxygen ; although a man, immersed in azote at 70 or 80 degrees would die of cold, if he did not of suffocation. I reiterate the first position, therefore, that even a thermometer ceases to be a guide, except in pure air.

Ordinarily, we can undergo a change of a few degrees in temperature, without danger or serious inconvenience; but there is a limit, beyond which the change becomes perilous and even fatal. Suppose in a school, having a winter term of only four months, and consisting of but fifty scholars, one quarter of an hour in a day, on an average is lost for all purposes of study, in consequence of the too great heat or cold of the room ; the aggregate loss, allowing six hours to a day, will be two hundred days, or more than eight months. And yet, in many of our schools, half the day, for all purposes of improvement, is, by this cause alone, substantially lost.

Every keeper of a green-house regulates its heat by a thermometer. The northern blasts which come down upon the blossoms of a farmer's orchard or garden, chill him as much as them. When shall we apply the same measure of wisdom to the welfare of children as to that of fruits and vegetables ! I am told by physicians, that from 65 to 70 degrees is a proper temperature for a room. Something, however, must depend upon the habits of the children. In cities, there is generally less exposure to cold, than in the country ; and factory children would suffer from cold, when those employed in the out-door occupations of agriculture would be comfortably warm.

SIZE.

The next thing in point of importance in regard to a school-house is its dimensions. In almost every thing heretofore written on this subject, the size of the school-room, in proportion to the number of scholars, has been a very leading topic. And, certainly, if there be no special means provided for changing the air in the room, the importance of liberal dimensions cannot be exaggerated. But if, instead of forcing foul air back again and again into the children's lungs, we permit nature to perform her gratuitous and beneficent labor, by carrying it beyond their reach, as soon as it has once been respired, then one main object of increasing the size of the room is already accomplished. The great end of a supply of healthful air being secured, the dimensions of the room are left to be determined by other considerations. These are the convenient arrangement of the seats, so that the teacher can survey the whole school with a single look ; so that each scholar can have an easy access to his own seat, without disturbing or being disturbed by any other ; and so as to remove the temptations to communicate, to play or to aggress.

In regard to the size of the rooms, it may be observed, generally, that in addition to the room requisite for seats and desks, as described below, there should be an open space all round the walls, at least two feet and a half in width, besides room for common recitations, and for the teacher's desk. Seats may be attached to the walls for the accommodation of visitors, or for the scholars, should it ever be desirable for any purpose, to arrange them in a continuous line. Moveable benches may be provided,—instead of seats fastened to the wall,—to be taken away, when not wanted for use, and so to leave that space entirely unoccupied. Joseph Lancaster, in making arrangements for great numbers of the children of the poor, where cheapness was a main object, allows nine feet area, on the floor, to each scholar. His rooms were fifteen or twenty feet high. If only fifteen feet high, an area of nine feet would give one hundred and thirty-five cubic feet of space to each scholar ; and one hundred and thirty-five cubic feet in a room ten feet high, would give to each scholar an area four feet in length and almost three feet and a half in

width. Even at this rate a family of six persons would have a room only about eight feet by ten.

DESKS, SEATS, &c.

It seems to be a very prevalent opinion, at the present day, amongst all professional teachers, that seats, on a horizontal floor, are preferable to those which rise on the sides or at the end of a room, or both, in the form of an amphitheatre. And it is obviously a great fault in the construction of a room, if, when a class is brought upon the floor to recite, the teacher is obliged to turn his back upon the school, when he looks at the class, or upon the class when he looks at the school. A level floor also increases the space for air, and as the room is warmed downwards, it makes the temperature more equable. The seats with desks should be arranged in parallel lines, lengthwise of the room, with aisles between, each seat to accommodate one scholar only. Although it would be better, that they should be moveable, yet as this cannot, perhaps, ordinarily be done for district schools, the front side of one seat may be the back of the next in the row. Eighteen inches is, perhaps, a suitable width for the aisles. Each desk should be two feet long, and not less than one foot and six inches wide. A width of one foot and nine inches would be better. In some houses, the seats connected with single desks are one foot square, and are placed behind the middle of the desks; in others the seats are one foot wide and as long as the desks. It may sometimes be desirable to place two scholars temporarily on the same seat, as for the purpose of reading from the same book. The former arrangement would make this impracticable. The children will sit more easily and more upright, if the back of the seats slope a little from them, at the shoulder blades; and also, if the seats themselves incline a little—the front part being a little the highest. The forward part of the desk should be level for about three or four inches. The residue should have a slight inclination. A slope of an inch and a half in a foot would, probably, be sufficient. It should not be so great, as that books and slates would slide off. For the deposit of books, and so forth, there may be a shelf under the desk, or the desk may be a box, with a cover, hung upon hinges

for a lid. The first method supersedes the necessity of raising a lid, by which books, pencils, and so forth, are sometimes thrown upon the floor or upon the front neighbor. The shelf, however, is far less convenient, and the contents are liable to be perpetually dropped out. The box and lid on the whole seem much preferable, the sloping part of the cover to constitute the lid. For the security of the desks, locks and keys are sometimes used. But the keys will occasionally be lost, by accident ; and sometimes, by bad scholars, on purpose. Besides, what appalling images throng the mind, at the reflection, that the earliest associations of children in regard to the security of property amongst themselves, must be of locks and hiding places, instead of honesty and justice ! The board which makes the front of one seat and the back of the next should rise, perhaps a couple of inches above the level of the horizontal part of the desk, to prevent things from sliding off forwards. Into this horizontal part of the desk, the inkstands may be let ; so loosely, however, as to allow of their being taken out to be filled ; and so deep, that their tops will be on a level with the desks. They may be covered, either with a metallic lid, resembling a butt hinge, to rise and fall ; or, which is better, with a common slide, or with a flat circular piece of pewter, having a stem projecting on one side, like the stem of a watch, through which a nail or screw may be driven, not tightly, but so that the cover may be made to slide over or off the orifice of the inkstand, on the nail or screw, as a hinge.

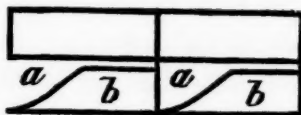
Instead of the form of desks, above described, I have seen some, constructed after the plan of Mr. Alcott's Prize Essay, in which the box or case for the books, and so forth, is in the front part of the desk ; that is, in the horizontal and not the sloping part of the desk above described. They are made about eight inches in width, and deep enough to receive the largest atlases, slates, and writing books, when placed edgewise, for which purpose, an inch or two on one side of the box is partitioned off. The lid is hung on hinges, as above described, and when shut forms a part of the desk.*

Last year a gentleman in Hartford, Conn., offered a handsome

* Mr. Alcott's Prize Essay may be found at the end of the second volume of the Lectures, published by the American Institute of Instruction in 1831, and is a very valuable paper.

premium for the best form of a desk for schools. Several plans were submitted to the judges, selected to award the premium. They decided in favor of a desk, designed to accommodate two scholars, upon one seat. The desk was a tight box, without any lid, but having an oblong opening, *at each end*, large enough to admit books, slates, &c. In this way, whatever was put in or taken out of the desk would be exposed to the view of the teacher and scholars.

The edge of the desk and of the seat should be in the same perpendicular line. This will not allow the scholar to stand up in front of his seat ; but if the seats and desks are single, he can stand on one side of the seat. If the seats and desks are designed for two scholars, then the corner of each scholar's seat may be cut off, as in the representation below.



Here each scholar can stand up in the corner *a*, or sit upon the seat *b*.

In regard to the height of the seats, it is common to give exact measurements. But inflexible rules will never fit varying circumstances. Some school-rooms are for females ; others for boys only. In factory villages, usually, a great proportion of the scholars are young ; while, in one county in the state, great numbers of the males attending school, during the winter term, are more than sixteen years of age. To follow unvarying rules, therefore, would aggrieve as many as it would accommodate. But the principles to be observed are few and capable of a definite exposition. A live child cannot be expected to sit still, unless he has a support to his back, and a firm resting place for his feet. As a scholar sits upright in his seat, the knee joint forming a right angle and the feet being planted horizontally on the floor, no pressure whatever should come upon the thigh bone where it crosses the edge of the seat. If obliged to sit upon too high a seat, a foot board or block should always be provided for the feet to rest upon. Children sometimes go to school at an age when many of their bones are almost as limber as a green withe, when almost any one of the numerous joints in the body may be

loosened or distorted. They go almost as early, as when the Chinese turn their children's feet into the shape of horses' hoofs ; or when some tribes of Indians make their children's heads as square as a joiner's box. And, at this period of life, when portions of the bones are but little more than cartilage, and the muscles will stretch like sheep's leather, the question is, whether the seats shall be conformed to the children or the children shall be deformed to the seats. I wish to fortify myself on this subject, by making a few extracts from a lecture on Physical Education, by that celebrated surgeon, Dr. John C. Warren. "When children are sent to school, care should be taken, that they are not confined too long. Children under fourteen should not be kept in school more than six or seven hours in a day ; and this period should be shortened for females. It is expedient, that it should be broken into many parts ; so as to avoid a long confinement at one time. Young persons, however well disposed, cannot support a restriction to one place and one posture. Nature resists such restrictions ; and if enforced, they are apt to create disgust with the means and the object. Thus children learn to hate studies, that might be rendered agreeable, and they take an aversion to instructors, who would otherwise be interesting to them.

"The postures they assume, while seated at their studies, are not indifferent. They should be frequently warned against the practice of maintaining the head and neck long in a stooping position, and the disposition to it should be lessened by giving a proper elevation and slope to the desk, and the seat should have a support or back.

"The influence of an upright form and open breast has been sufficiently explained ; and what may be done to acquire these qualities, is shown by many remarkable facts, one of which I will mention. For a great number of years, it has been the custom in France to give to young females of the earliest age, the habit of holding back the shoulders, and thus expanding the chest. From the observation of anatomists, lately made, it appears that the clavicle or collar bone is actually longer in females of the French nation, than in those of the English. The French have succeeded in the developement of a part, in a way that adds to health and beauty, and increases a characteristic, that distinguishes the human being from the brute.

“While all of us are desirous of possessing the excellent qualities of strength, hardiness and beauty, how defective are our own systems of education in the means of acquiring them.

“In the course of my observations, I have been able to satisfy myself, that about half the young females brought up as they are at present, undergo some visible and obvious change of structure ; that a considerable number are the subjects of great and permanent deviations ; and that not a few entirely lose their health from the manner in which they are reared.

“I feel warranted in the assertion, that, of the well-educated females, within my sphere of experience, about *one half are affected with some degree of distortion of spine.*

“The *lateral* distortion of the spine is almost wholly confined to females, and is scarcely ever found existing in the other sex. The difference results from a difference of habits during the school education. The immediate cause of the lateral curve of the spine to the right, is the elevation and action of the right arm in drawing and writing.”

Much more might be quoted, apposite to this important subject. It seems only necessary to add, that nothing so essentially tends to aggravate these evils, as the want of a proper resting place for the feet. Let any man try the experiment, and see how long he can sit in an upright posture on a narrow bench or seat, without being able to reach the floor with his feet, and consequently with the whole weight of his feet, boots and the lower parts of the limbs, acting with the power of a lever across the middle of the thigh bones. Yet, to this position, hundreds of children in this state, are regularly confined, month after month; and while condemned to this unnatural posture, nature inflicts her punishments of insupportable uneasiness and distress on every joint and muscle, if they do sit still, and the teacher inflicts his punishments, if they do not. A gentleman, extensively known to the citizens of this state, for the benevolence of his character and the candor of his statements, who, for the last twenty years, has probably visited more of our common schools, than any other person in the state, writes to me as follows : “I have no hesitation in repeating what I have often publicly declared, that, from the bad construction of our school-houses, there is more physi-

cal suffering endured by our children in them than by prisoners in our jails and prisons."* The following is an extract of a letter, addressed to a "*Common School Convention*," held at Northampton in February, 1837, by Dr. Joseph H. Flint, of that place: "For want of attention to the subject," (the construction of school-houses,) "I have the means of knowing, that there has been annually loss of life, destruction of health, and in numberless instances, anatomical deformities, that render life hardly worth having. In the construction of school-houses, there are many considerations, involving the comfort and health and life of the young," &c.

I am informed by surgeons and physicians, that a pupil, when writing, should face the writing desk squarely. This position avoids all unequal lateral pressure upon the spinal column, and of course all unequal tension of the muscles on either side of it. It also interferes least with the free play of the thoracic viscera, which is a point of great importance. The edge of the desk should then be an inch or two above the bend of the elbow, as the arm hangs nearly by the side. Any slight want of exact adjustment can be corrected, by extending the elbow farther from, or bringing it nearer to the body.

The height of the seats and desks should of course be graduated, to fit the different sizes of the scholars; the smallest scholars sitting nearest the teacher's desk.

The arrangement of seats without desks, for small scholars, when needed, is too obvious to require any explanation. Their proper position will depend upon the other arrangements of the school-room. Long benches, having separate chair-shaped seats, but with a continuous back, are sometimes used.

The place for hanging hats, bonnets, and so forth, will also depend upon the general construction of the house. It should be such as to encourage habits of neatness and order.

The instructor's desk should be upon a platform, raised so high as to give him a view of the persons of the pupils above their desks. When the school is not large, it should be at the end of the room. It should overlook the play-ground. Cases for the deposit and preservation of the apparatus and library should be near the desk,

* The Rev. Gardiner B. Perry, of Bradford.

except where a separate apartment is provided. A teacher without apparatus,—however numerous may be his books,—is like a mechanic with but half a set of tools.

The average number of scholars in the schools in Massachusetts is about fifty. When the school is large, there should be a separation of the older from the younger children, and the latter, at least, placed under the care of a female teacher. The opinion is almost universal, in this state, that female teaching for young children is, in every respect, superior to male. If the number of the older scholars be large, there should be a separate recitation room, and a door and an entry for the entrance and accommodation of each sex.

In very large schools, it may be thought expedient to have desks, sufficiently long to accommodate six or more scholars, with chairs, fastened to the floor for seats, and a space between the chairs and the next tier of desks, for passing in and out. In such cases, the desks may be placed longitudinally, and the teacher's platform for himself and assistants extend the whole length of the room, in front of them.

I now come to a subject, which I think of primary importance. It is the almost universal practice of teachers to call their classes out upon the floor for reading and recitation. If there were no other reason, the change of position it gives them, is a sufficient one. The seats in school-rooms, are almost without exception, so arranged, that these proceedings take place in full view of all the scholars ; and they are often so, that when the teacher turns his face towards the class, he must turn his back upon the school. The idle and disorderly seize upon such occasions to violate the rules of the school. This, they can generally do, with perfect impunity. They can screen themselves from observation, by moving the head so that an intermediate scholar shall intercept the teacher's view ; or by holding up a book, slate or atlas, before themselves, and under such shield, can whisper, eat or grimace. But the effect upon the attentive is worse, than upon the idle ; and its tendency is to turn the former into the latter. The eye is the quickest of all the senses, and the minds of children always yield instant obedience to it, and follow wherever it leads. Every one must have observed, that when a class is reciting in presence of a school, if any thing unusual or in-

congruous transpires, such as the falling of a book or slate, or the ludicrous pronunciation of a word, the attention of every scholar is broken off from his study. The blunder or stammering of a four years' old child, learning letters, will strike every hand in the school off its work. While the senses, and especially the eye, are bringing vivid images to the mind, it is almost impossible for men and quite so for children to deny them access. Much of what the world admires as talent is only a power of fixing attention upon an object, and of looking steadily at it until the whole of it is seen. The power of concentration is one of the most valuable of intellectual attainments, because it is the principal means of achieving any other ; and the pupil, with but little positive knowledge, in whom this has become a habit of mind has a far higher chance of success in any walk of life, than one with a thousand times the knowledge, but without the habit. This power is an acquired one as much as any other ; and as susceptible as any other of improvement. But overtasking destroys it, just as overloading the limbs crushes, instead of strengthening them. Reference must be had, therefore, to the ordinary powers of children's minds, or we shall have distraction instead of abstraction. Much fixedness of thought ought not to be expected from the giddiness and volatility of children. In rooms of the common construction, I do not believe that more than one-half of the time is available for study. Not only therefore, ought the desire of strengthening this power to be inspired, but the arrangement of the room and the tactics of the school should be made to contribute, unconsciously to the children, to the same effect. Although the habits of the mind are the main thing to be regarded in education, yet it cannot be denied that one hour of concentrated attention on any subject is worth more than a week's listless hovering and floating around it. Hence, where there is no separate recitation-room, (which, however, every large school ought to have,) the area for that purpose should be behind the scholars who remain in their seats. The teacher can then take such a position at the end of the room, opposite his desk, as to command at once, a view of the reciting class and the rest of the school. He will then see, without being seen. The scholars can interpose nothing between themselves and him. Ev-

ery scholar would be convinced, by strict vigilance on the part of the teacher, during the first week of the school, that he had no power of violating rules without detection. They would, therefore, yield to the necessity of the case. The temptation would die with the opportunity to gratify it. The ear only of the scholars would be solicited to notice the voices behind them, while the stronger attraction of visible objects, the book, the slate, the map, would rivet eye and mind upon the subjects of study. This slight interruption in the rear, while the mind enjoyed such advantages for overcoming it, would increase its power of continuous attention, and enable it, in after life, to carry on processes of thought in the midst of conversation or other disturbing occurrences. Still, it is thought, that the teacher's desk should always face those of the scholars; so that when a class recites in the seats, when the whole school joins in any exercise, or when they are to be addressed, each party should be able to see the other face to face. The social principle will never otherwise, flow freely.

LOCATION OF SCHOOL-HOUSES.

All philosophers agree that external objects affect temper and character. If their influences are imperceptible, the results will be so much the surer, because imperceptible influences are never resisted. Because children cannot analyse and state in propositions the feelings, which outward circumstances breathe into their susceptible minds, it is no proof, that they are not undergoing insensible changes. Every body recognizes the silent influences of external nature, if exerted only for a few days, in the case of those religious sects, who use the forest for a temple. Fatal contagions enter through skin or lungs, without sending forward any herald. Subtle influences upon such delicate tissues as the nerves and brain are not seen in the process, but only in the result. But experience and reason enable us to foresee such consequences, and, foreseeing, to control them. Adults alone can perform such a duty. If they neglect it, the children must suffer.

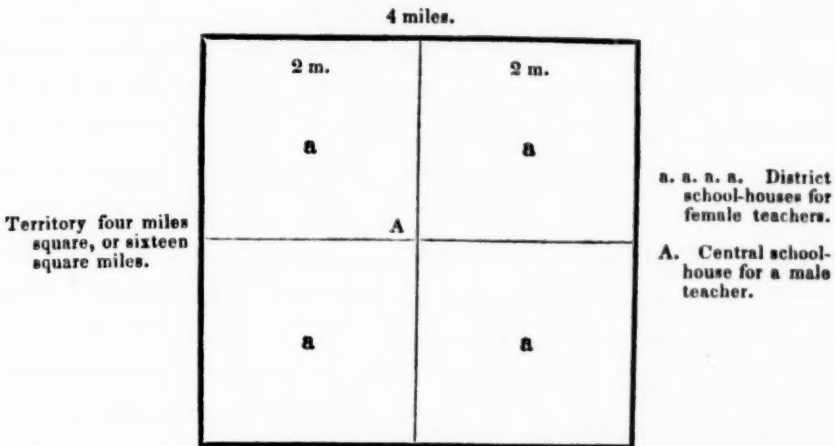
It has been often objected to the people of our state that they insist upon having the school-house in the geographical centre of the

district. And, other things being equal, surely it ought to be in the centre. But the house is erected for the children and not for the acres ; and the inconvenience of going fifty or even eighty rods farther is not to be compared with the benefit of spending a whole day in a healthful, comfortable, pleasing spot,—one full of salutary influences upon the feelings and temper. Place a school-house in a bleak and unsheltered situation, and the difficulty of attaining and preserving a proper degree of warmth is much increased ; put it upon a sandy plain without shade or shelter from the sun, and the whole school is subjected to the evils of heat and dust ; plant it in low marshy grounds, and it exposes to colds or to more permanent diseases of the lungs, and impairs habits of cleanliness both in dress and person ; make one side of it the boundary of a public road, and the persons of the children are endangered by the travel, when out, and their attention, when in, called off the lesson by every passer by ; place it on a little remnant or delta of land, where roads encircle it on all sides, without any place of seclusion from the public gaze and the modesty of nature will be overlaid with habits of indecorum ; and a want of decency enforced upon boys and girls, will become physical and moral turpitude in men and women. But build it, where some sheltering hill or wood mitigates the inclemency of winter ; where a neighboring grove tempers the summer heat, furnishing cool and shady walks ; remove it a little from the public highway and from buildings where noisy and clattering trades are carried on ; and, above all, rescue it from sound or sight of all resorts for license and dissipation, and a sensibility to beauty, a purity of mind, a sentiment of decency and propriety will be developed and fostered, and the chances of elevated feelings and correct conduct in after life will be increased manifold. Habits of mental order and propriety are best cherished amidst external order and propriety. It is a most beautiful trait in the character of children, that they take the keenest delight in the simplest pleasures. Their desires do not tax commerce for its luxuries, nor exhaust wealth for its embellishments. Such pleasures as are imparted by the cheerful light and the quickening air, by the way-side flowers, the running stream, or the music of birds, are sufficient for the more gentle and pensive ; and the impetuous and exuberant of spirit only want a place to let off the redundant activity of their arms

and legs. And how cheaply can these sources of gratification be purchased. Sometimes a little of the spirit of compromise ; sometimes a little forgetfulness of strifes among the parents, engendered on other subjects, would secure to the children the double boon of utility and enjoyment. Yet how often are the unoffending children ground between the collisions of their parents !

It seems not unconnected with this subject to inquire, whether, in many places out of our cities, a plan may not be adopted to give greater efficiency to the means, now devoted to common-school education. The population of many towns is so situated as conveniently to allow a gradation of the schools. For children under the age of eight or ten years, about a mile seems a proper limit, beyond which they should not be required to travel to school. On this supposition one house, as centrally situated as circumstances will permit, would accommodate the population upon a territory of four square miles, or, which is the same thing, two miles square. But a child above that age can go two miles to school, or even rather more, without serious inconvenience. There are many persons, whose experience attests, that they never enjoyed better health or made greater progress, than when they went two miles and a half or three miles, daily, to school. Supposing, however, the most remote scholars to live only at about the distance of two miles from the school, one house will then accommodate all the older children upon a territory of about sixteen square miles, or four miles square. Under such an arrangement, while there were four schools in a territory of four miles square, i. e. sixteen square miles, for the younger children, there would be one central school for the older. Suppose there is \$600 to be divided amongst the inhabitants of this territory of sixteen square miles, or \$150 for each of the four districts. Suppose farther, that the average wages for male teachers is \$25, and for female \$12 50, per month. If, according to the present system, four male teachers are employed for the winter term and four female for the summer, each of the summer and winter schools may be kept four months. The money would then be exhausted ; i. e. four months summer, at 12 50 = \$50, and four months winter, at \$25 = \$100 ;—both = \$150. But according to the plan suggested, the same money would pay for six months, summer school, instead of

four, in each of the four districts, and for a male teacher's school eight months, at \$35 a month, instead of four months at \$25 a month, and would then leave \$20 in the treasury.



By this plan the great superiority of female over male training for children under eight, ten or twelve years of age would be secured ; the larger scholars would be separated from the smaller, and thus the great diversity of studies and of classes in the same school, which now crumbles the teacher's time into dust, would be avoided ; the female schools would be lengthened one half ; the length of the male schools would be doubled, and for the increased compensation, a teacher of fourfold qualifications could be employed. Undoubtedly, in many towns, upon the Cape or among the mountains, the course of the roads and the face of the territory would present insuperable obstacles to the full reduction of this scheme to practice. But it is as unquestionable, that in many others no physical impediments exist to its immediate adoption ; especially, if we consider the legal power of different towns to unite portions of their territory for the joint maintenance of schools. We have not yet brought the power of united action to bear with half its force upon the end or the means of education. I think it will yet be found more emphatically true in this department of human action, than in any other, that adding individual means multiplies social power. If four districts cannot be united, three may. If the central point of the territory happen to be populous, a school-house may be built, consisting of two rooms ; one for the large, the other for the small scholars ; both upon the

same floor, or one above the other. It ought to be remarked, that where there are two school-rooms under the same roof, care should be taken to have the walls well deafened, so that neither should ever be incommoded by any noises in the other.

The above enumeration of requisites in a school-house is considered absolutely essential and indispensable. Just so far as they are disregarded, that nursery for the rearing of vigorous, intelligent and upright men, must fail of its object. If the children's lungs are fed only with noxious and corrupted air, which has once performed its office, and is, therefore, incapable of performing it again, without renovation, it may generate positive and incurable disease, and impair the energies both of body and mind for the residue of life. "In looking back upon the languor of *fifty years* of labor as a teacher," said the venerable Mr. Woodbridge, "reiterated with many a weary day, I attribute a great proportion of it to *mephitic air*; nor can I doubt that it has compelled *many worthy and promising teachers* to quit the employment. Neither can I doubt that it has been *the great cause* of their subsequent sickly habits and untimely decease." People, who shudder at a flesh wound and a trickle of blood, will confine their children like convicts, and compel them, month after month, to breathe quantities of poison. It would less impair the mental and physical constitutions of our children, gradually to draw an ounce of blood from their veins, during the same length of time, than to send them to breathe, for six hours in a day, the lifeless and poisoned air of some of our school-rooms. Let any man, who votes for confining children in small rooms and keeping them on stagnant air, try the experiment of breathing his own breath only four times over; and, if medical aid be not at hand, the children will never be endangered by his vote afterwards. Such darkening and benumbing of the mind accustoms it, in its first beginnings, to look at objects, as it were, through a haze, and to seize them with a feeble grasp, and robs it of the pleasure of seeing things in a bright light. Children always feel a keen delight in the consciousness of overcoming difficulties and of fully comprehending any subject. This pleasure is the most legitimate of all rewards, and one which nature always pays down on the spot. But, instead of this, after filling their brains with bird-lime, we taunt or chastise them, if they stick or get posed. If a child suf-

fer from heat or cold, from a constrained or unnatural position ; if his attention be perpetually broken off by causes beyond his control ; it tends to make his temper fretful and irritable, and compels him to go back, again and again, to the beginning of his problem or exercise, like a traveller obliged to return home and commence his journey anew after having completed half its distance.

LIGHT. WINDOWS.

The manner in which a school-house is lighted is of no inconsiderable consequence. The additional cost of obeying philosophical principles is, at most, trivial. We ought also to remember, that the laws of nature are never violated with impunity. In modern times the eye is much more used than formerly. Civilization has imposed multiplied and difficult labors upon that organ. Perhaps the eye gives fewer monitions of being overworked, than any other bodily power. It seems more to exhaust its strength, and then fail irrecoverably. If so, it should be protected by the foresight of reason. When provision is not made for admitting into a school-room a good deal more light than is ordinarily wanted, there will frequently be too little, and no remedy. Hence the windows should be such, as to furnish sufficient light at all times, and means provided for excluding any excess. Window-blinds and curtains, therefore, are essential. The transitions of light in the open air are very great ; but it is to be observed, that there is no out-of-door occupation, which severely tasks the eye. But in a school-room, without blinds or curtains, when the sun is allowed to shine directly upon a child's head, book or desk, the transition is greater and more sudden than in the open air ; while, at the same time, the eye, being intensely engaged in looking at minute objects, has its pupil widely distended, so that the greatest quantity of light falls upon the optic nerve.

The following is extracted from a lecture, delivered by Dr. Edward Reynolds of Boston, before the American Institute of Instruction, in 1833. "How much talent lies dormant by the morbidly sensitive eyesight, occasioned by inordinate and untimely use of the eyes ! This last mentioned evil is increasing to a fearful amount among the young. Accurate inquiries have convinced me,

that a large number of these individuals must go back to the school room to find the source of their infirmities."

No persons, going with their eyes unprotected, ever cross the Andes, without losing their sight. The glare of light from the snow destroys it. Such facts admonish us to beware of exposing the eyes of the young, either to very intense light or to great transitions, while engaged in looking at small letters or in making fine marks on white paper. To say that the loss or impairing of sight is an evil too contingent and uncertain to demand precaution, is neither philosophical nor humane. Admit, that it is a contingent and uncertain evil, in regard to any particular individual, so exposed; as it is uncertain, which of the children, in Egypt shall be blind men; yet that some one out of a given number, subjected to the danger, shall be blind, is as certain as any law of nature. Laws applicable to classes of men are just as infallible in their operation, as those applicable to individuals, though we cannot foresee upon which of the individuals in the class, the law is to be verified. In a multitude of cases, each tendency however slight, will have its quota of the results. Hence the necessity of meeting tendencies with prevention.*

In order that passing, out-door objects and events may not draw off the attention of the scholars, it is usually recommended to insert the windows so high, that such objects and events will be invisible in the school-room. It cannot, however, be denied, that this gives to the room a prison or cellar-like appearance. May not such interruptions be better avoided by selecting a retired situation and by arranging the seats, so that the scholars shall sit facing from the road? Nor can there be any necessity of having the windows very high for this purpose. As scholars sit in their seats, the eyes of but few will be more than three feet and a half from the floor. This would allow of windows six feet deep in a room ten feet high. So, too, it would be a perfect security against the evil, if the lower sash or the lowest part of it were glazed with ground glass. The windows should be made so that the upper sash can be lowered. This may be very desirable in summer, independently of the considerations, above urged, in regard to ventilation.

* See Appendix C.

YARDS OR PLAY-GROUNDS.

On this subject, I have never seen, nor am I able to prepare, any thing so judicious, and apposite to the condition of the Districts in Massachusetts, as the following paragraphs, taken from a Report, published in 1833, "by order of the Directors of the Essex County Teachers' Association."

"As the situation should be pleasant and healthful, so there should be sufficient space around the building. With the number who ordinarily attend these institutions, not less than a quarter of an acre should ever be thought of as a space for their accommodation, and this should be enclosed from the public highway, so as to secure it from cattle, that the children may have a safe and clean place for exercise at recess and at other times. We believe it no uncommon thing for a district to meet with difficulty in procuring a place for a house; for while most wish it to be near, they are unwilling to have it stand on a notch, taken out of their own field. This reluctance to accommodate the district may have been carried too far; the actual may be less than the imagined evils. Yet it is not without foundation, for in most instances, from the scanty and niggardly provision made by the district, the man knows that his own cultivated fields must and will be made the place of the scholars' recreation. We do not overstate, when we say, that more than half the inconveniences which persons thus experience in their property from the contiguity of a school-house, arises from the insufficient provision made for the children by the district. While all the district may think that a neighbor is unaccommodating, because he is unwilling to let them have just land enough to set their house upon, the real truth is, that the smallness of the lot is the very thing which justifies his reluctance; for whether he theorise or not on the subject, he well understands that he will have to afford accommodations, which the district are unwilling on their part to purchase. Every school-house lot should be large enough for the rational exercise which the children ought to have, and will take. It would be well to have it large enough to contain some ornamental and fruit trees with flower borders, which we know children may be taught to cultivate and

enjoy ; and by an attention to which their ideas of property, and common rights, and obligations, would become more distinct. By attention to what belonged to themselves, they would be kept from many of those wanton injuries too often done to the possessions of those near them.

“ In regard to space no one can be ignorant of the general practice. We believe it would be difficult in this county to find a score of these buildings, where the lot is as large as the most inexperienced on the subject would judge necessary.

“ In by far the greater number of instances, there is no more ground than that which is occupied by the building ; while many of them actually stand partly or wholly in the highway. The children, therefore, have no resort but to the public highway, or the private property of their neighbors for amusement. Healthful and vigorous exercise is restrained, the modesty of nature is often outraged, and not unfrequently, a permanent and extensive injury done to the finer and better feelings, which ought, at that age, to be cultivated and confirmed by the most careful attention, not only as a great security from sin, but as a most lovely ornament through life. Besides this, there being no place for pleasant exercise for the boys out of doors, the school-room, during the intermission at noon, becomes the place of noise and tumult, where not from any real intention, but in the forgetfulness of general excitement, gentlemanly and lady-like feelings are turned into ridicule, and an attempt to behave in an orderly and becoming manner, subjects the individual to no small degree of persecution. We have often witnessed such instances, and known those who refused to engage in these rude exercises, forced out of the room and kept out during the greater part of an intermission, because their example cast a damp upon a course of rude and boisterous conduct, in which they could not take a part. Whatever others may think, it is our belief that this noise and tumult is in a great measure the natural overflowing of youthful buoyancy, which, were it allowed to spend itself in out-door amusements, would hardly ever betray itself improperly in the house.”

There is another topic of primary importance, the merits of which are so well developed in a portion of the “ Report” above referred

to, that I shall need no apology for transferring it to these pages. It regards,

THE DUTY OF INSTRUCTORS IN RELATION TO SCHOOL-HOUSES.

“Though Instructors may, ordinarily, have no direct agency in erecting and repairing the buildings where they are employed to keep school, yet by a little carefulness, ingenuity and enterprise, they can do much to avoid some of the evils connected with them. When about to open a school they can look at the house, as a mechanic at his shop, and adapt their system to the building, and not carry into a house ill adapted to its developement, a system of operations, however speculatively just it may appear in their own minds. The buildings are already constructed, and of materials not over plastic, and often as incapable of accommodating a system got up in some other place, as the house of the Vicar of Wakefield was, for the family painting. Instructors should make the most of what is comfortable and convenient, and remedy as far as possible what is bad. If the pupils are uncomfortably seated, they can allow them occasionally to change their seats, or alter their position, which, though attended with some inconvenience, cannot be compared with the evils growing out of pain and restlessness, and the effects which are likely to be produced upon the health, the disposition, morals, and progress in learning, from a long confinement in an uneasy position. Instructors can and ought to use their influence and authority to preserve the buildings from injuries, such as cutting the tables, loosening and splitting the seats, breaking the doors and windows, by which most houses of this class are shamefully mutilated, and their inconveniences, great enough at first, are increased. The extent to which injuries of this kind are done, and the inconveniences arising from it, in respect of writing books and clothes, are great beyond what is ordinarily thought ; and as it is possible in a considerable degree to prevent them, they should not be tolerated. So far as the scholars are concerned, it may arise from a mixture of causes ;—thoughtlessness, idleness, a restless disposition or real intent to do injury. But whatever may be the cause it argues an imperfection in the moral princi-

ple which, were it in wholesome exercise, would teach them that it is equally iniquitous to damage public as private property. The practice we refer to, is actual injustice, a real trespass, for which in almost all other cases, the offender would be called to an account. And we must confess that it is matter of just surprise, that more efforts have not been made to prevent it. A high responsibility relative to this concern, rests on the instructors. The power of preventing this, lies principally with them. It is obvious then to remark, if they have much reason to complain for want of better accommodations, they have some reason to reform, and in measuring out the blame which justly rests somewhere, to take a little portion to themselves. We are persuaded that School-Houses will be more readily built and repaired, when instructors shall use more exertions to save them from the folly and indiscretion of children. The injuries complained of, we are persuaded, if not wholly, yet to a great extent, can be prevented; and it is high time that parents and teachers, should bring together their fixed and operative determination, to suffer it no longer. Separate from the inconveniences which scholars themselves experience from it, a licentious and irresponsible feeling in regard to public property, is encouraged. If the well known loose sense of obligation in respect to public interests and the wanton injuries which are so frequently done to institutions of a public nature of every description, so pre-eminently common throughout this country does not spring up in the habits referred to, it is certainly most powerfully fostered by it; and there is great reason to apprehend, that a principle so loose in respect to public property, must extend itself by easy transitions to private. In every view, the practice is wrong, and the effect corrupting, and it is high time, that the attention of the community was directed to it, the obligations of men on this subject, more fully taught, and when necessary, enforced in all our institutions of learning, from the Infant School to the Professional Hall, not excepting our Theological Seminaries, where, if in any place, we should expect regard would be paid to public rights, and the bestowments of private munificence, and we could wish the evil complained of, stopped here, but truth constrains us to say, that the tables and seats of the Bench and Bar in our court houses, the Pews and even the Pulpits in our places of religious worship, bear evident

marks, that neither the "*ermine* nor the *lawn*," are sufficient to restrain this most shameful, deforming, and mischievous practice.

"Teachers should take the *management* of the fire entirely under their own control, for though their own *feelings* may not be the thermometer of the room, yet if they are at all qualified to teach, they must possess more discretion on this subject, than those under them. They should see that the room is in a comfortable condition by the time the exercises commence. Many a half day is nearly wasted, and sometimes, from the disorder consequent upon the state of things, worse than lost, because, when the children collect, the room is so cold, that they cannot study, nor can they be still. Nothing short of the master's being in the house a half hour before the school commences can, ordinarily, secure the object referred to. It may be objected, that instructors are not employed to build fires. We do not ask them to do it, but we ask them to see that fires are seasonably built. And we must think those who can define so nicely the limits of their obligations, as to excuse themselves from this care, have not the spirit of high-minded and enterprising teachers, and that however worthy they may be, and however well qualified for other employments, they should never offer themselves for that of school keeping.

"Instructors should see, also, that the school-room be in all its parts, kept in a clean and comfortable condition. Cleanliness is not ordinarily ranked so high, nor is the contrary habit ranked so low in the scale of moral worth and sinful defilement as they should be, nor do they, as we fear, enter so fully into the account when men are estimating their own moral state, or when others are estimating it for them, as they ought. We will not say, as a very able and careful observer of men once said, that he did not believe any person could be a true christian, who was not becomingly neat in his person and in his business ; yet we are free to say that every additional year's intercourse with the world in moral and religious concerns, deepens the conviction, that cleanliness is inseparable from any considerable advancement in a religious life, and that where its requirements are disregarded, there is much reason to apprehend that other and important defects of a moral nature do, most probably, exist. Cleanliness in one's person, and the various occupations, is intimately con-

nected with manly and upright conduct, chaste and pure thoughts, and sensible comfort in any situation ; and as a *service* exacted, or a *habit* established, would go far to secure good order and agreeable conduct in any school. We are persuaded that one of the most powerful helps towards good government, and consequent orderly conduct among the pupils, is overlooked through inattention or ignorance, where this principle is not called in ; and where an exertion to establish a principle and habit of neatness has not been put forth, one of the strong bonds to a future worthy moral conduct, is lost, and a most important and legitimate object of instruction and education neglected. Great exertions should be used to cultivate among the pupils, a taste for cleanliness, decency and elegance in all things, and their particular responsibility in respect to the proper state of the house, and all its outward connections. This is their *home*, for the good and decent state of which, their character is at stake and their comfort involved. They should firmly and perseveringly resolve, that the school-room should be kept clean, not simply swept, but often washed, and every day dusted. Without this attention it is impossible their own persons, their clothes or books can be preserved in a decent and comfortable state. The room they should consider as their parlor, and those that occupy it, company to one another. The room must, therefore, always be in a visiting condition. And what should prevent this ? Cannot a number of young people, all of whom, it must be presumed, are trained to order and neatness at home, bring the principles of order and neatness into an apartment, where they are to spend so much time together, and where any one who knows much of the business of common families, must know there is less excuse for any disorder or dirt, than there is in most of our houses ? We know it is practicable to have a school-room kept in a comfortable condition, and that youth instructed and encouraged to do this, and having their attention sufficiently directed to it, will soon become interested in the subject, and manifest a commendable disposition to have things as they ought to be, and a willingness to make all the personal efforts which are required, to accomplish it. And we are persuaded, that, when this is attempted, it will be found, perhaps, to the surprise of many, that from the less injury done to the clothes of scholars and to the books, as well

as from the better conduct which will invariably ensue, that many of the evils, connected with our common schools, would be removed.

“It is a fact, susceptible of as perfect demonstration as any moral proposition, that filth and dirt, if they be in part the effect, are at the same time, among the most efficient causes of corrupt morals and debased conduct. Gisborne, in one of his works, has a remark of this kind, (we do not pretend to quote his words,) that in a part of London, more young families, who, at setting out in life, promise well, are made corrupt and led into wretched and destructive habits, from the unhappy location of houses, which renders all attempts to keep them in a pure and comfortable condition ineffectual, than from any other single cause. Ineffectual efforts to keep things neat, led to neglect, neglect to filthy habits, and filthy habits to low and degraded vice. If such be the operation of a want of neatness in families, and we apprehend the justness of the remark will find support in instances which must have fallen within the knowledge of every attentive observer, are there not reasons to fear, that the same effects will follow the same course in school? There can be no doubt that in many instances, a sense of propriety is destroyed, in more, greatly weakened by the state of things in and about the houses of education. A disregard to this subject, too common among scholars, often settles down into a confirmed habit, and gradually spreads itself over the whole surface of action, and through life, the individual becomes less interesting in his appearance, less agreeable in his manners, less honorable in his conduct, and less moral and upright in his principles.

“Instructors should also guard against the bad influence upon the dispositions and manners of scholars, which the inconveniences they experience are apt to produce. The pain and uneasiness which a child experiences from an uncomfortable situation in school, he will very likely associate with his books and studies, or with the instructor and regulations of school; he may connect it with those who sit near him, and who may be just as uneasy as himself, and be ready to hate the whole and quarrel with all, because he feels pain and cannot or does not rightly understand the occasion of it. The local situation of children in school has a most obvious bearing upon the conduct and temper. Place them a little out of the observation of the instructor, and they will play; put them where they are crowded,

or sit with inconvenience, and they will quarrel. It has often been a subject of interest to me, says one of the committee, when visiting schools, to observe the operations of local circumstances upon the mind and conduct of children, and the more I have observed, the more importance am I constrained to attach to these things. In one house where I have many times called, I do not recollect ever passing a half hour, without seeing contention among those placed in a particular part of the room, and play in another. I distinctly recollect the same thing in the seminary where I pursued my preparatory studies. It was as obvious in the lecture room in college. In the seminary which I had the care of for some years, it was so apparent that I often changed the situation of those who were unfavorably placed, to prevent the feelings and conduct likely to be produced from settling down into confirmed habits. For permanent bad effects may and have, in fact, grown out of these circumstances. Quarrels, also, which have sprung up between children, and which had no other legitimate cause, than their being placed together in school, on uncomfortable seats, have led to a state of unkind feelings, and unfriendly conduct through life. The influence has sometimes extended beyond the individuals; families and neighborhoods have been drawn into the contention; and, in not a few instances, whole districts thrown into disorder, only because at first some little twig of humanity had become restless and quarrelsome, in consequence of his uneasy position in school.

“But if the effect be confined to the individual, yet it may be sufficiently unhappy. Suppose from one of the causes above named, the child acquires a habit of loose and foolish playfulness, or of restless discontent—suppose he acquire a disrelish for schools, his books, or unkind feelings towards his instructor, or his fellows—will there not be much personal loss, and is there no danger of future consequences—is there no danger that these feelings will go into future life, and the individual prove less comfortable to himself, and less comfortable to others? Youth is the season when the character is formed, and direction given to the feelings and the conduct. It is a matter of no small interest, to the man himself or those with whom he is to act in future life, that these be of a gentle and accommodating character.

“ Since, therefore, from the construction of many of our school-houses, it is not possible for the scholars to be altogether free from suffering, it is a subject well worthy the special attention of instructors, carefully to guard against the consequences which it is like to produce upon their temper and conduct. This may be done in some degree, by allowing the children occasionally to change their situation, to rise and stand up a few minutes ; or at convenient seasons, giving them a short additional recess. To remove in some degree, the gloom and deformities of the house, and at the same time to draw off the attention from their bodily pains, scholars should be allowed to ornament it with greens and flowers, and other things of an innocent nature attracting to the minds of youth. Agreeable objects originate agreeable feelings, and pleasant feelings lead to good conduct. We would also recommend to instructors to encourage the children in places where there is the least prospect of security, to cultivate flower borders upon the school-house grounds ; and certainly in boxes set in the house. Should it be objected, that their attention would in this way be withdrawn from their books, we must reply, that we doubt the fact, and would in turn ask whether the feelings, the taste and the understanding would not be most essentially improved by attention to the works of nature, and efforts to bring to the highest perfection, those things which a wise Providence, who knows by what means the character of man is to be formed, has made beautiful to the eye. Our own feelings have often been hurt and our views of expediency entirely crossed, when we have seen, as we have on many occasions, a handsome branch, or beautiful flower, or well arranged nosegay, torn in a censorious and ruthless manner from the hand of a child, or the place where his love for ornament and beauty had placed it. We would encourage the children to make the room of confinement as pleasant to them, as they can consistently with other duties ; and if at any time it be observed, that these things are gaining an undue influence over them, to check it as any other practice not evil in itself, but only in excess, should be corrected. It should be done in such a manner, that the child should be left free to enjoy, as far as it is safe to enjoy, and feel too that he does it with the full approbation and good will of his instructor.

“There is one subject more to which we must be permitted to refer ; one in which the morals of the young are intimately connected, one in which parents, instructors and scholars should unite their efforts to produce a reform. There should be nothing in or about the school-houses, calculated to defile the mind, corrupt the heart, or excite unholy and forbidden appetites ; yet considering the various character of those brought together in our public schools, and considering also how inventive are corrupt minds, in exhibiting openly the defilement which reigns within, we do not know but we must expect that school-houses, as well as other public buildings, and even fences will continue to bear occasional marks both of lust and profaneness. But we must confess, that the general apathy which apparently exists on this subject, does appear strange to us. It is a humbling fact, that in many of these houses, there are highly indecent, profane and libidinous marks, images and expressions, some of which are spread out in broad characters on the walls, where they unavoidably meet the eyes of all who come into the house, or being on the outside, salute the traveller as he passes by, wounding the delicate and annoying the moral sensibilities of the heart. While there is still a much greater number, in smaller character, upon the tables and seats of the students, and even, in some instances, of the instructors, constantly before the eyes of those who happen to occupy them. How contaminating these must be, no one can be entirely insensible. And yet how unalarmed, or if not entirely unalarmed, how little is the mind of the community directed to the subject, and how little effort put forth to stay this fountain of corruption. Such things ought not to be ; they can, to a considerable extent, be prevented. The community are not, therefore, altogether clear in this matter.

When we regard the deleterious effect which the want of accommodation and other imperfections in and about these buildings, must have upon the growth, health, and perfectness of the bodily system, upon the mental and moral powers, upon the tender and delicate feelings of the heart, we must suppose there is as pressing a call for the direct interference of the wise and benevolent, to produce an improvement, as there is for the efforts of the Prison Discipline Society, or for many of the benevolent exertions of the day. And we do most solemnly and affectionately call upon all, according to their

situation in life, to direct their attention to the subject ; for the bodies, the minds, the hearts of the young and rising generation require this. It is a service due to the present and future generation. A service due to their bodies and souls."

I will now bring this long statement to a close by the enumeration of a few further particulars, which could not well be arranged under any of the preceding heads ; *and shall omit such things only as no CIVILIZED people can ever forget.*

Where the expense can be afforded, every school-house should be provided with a bell. If not the only mode, it is probably the best one for ensuring punctuality ; and the importance of punctuality can hardly be overstated, either as it regards the progress of the school collectively, or the habits of the individual pupils. If morals were to be divided into the greater and the less, the virtue of punctuality should be set down in the first class. Probably there are few districts, which would not obtain a full equivalent, every year, for the price of a bell, in the improved habits and increased progress of the children.

It is also very desirable to have a time-piece placed in some part of the school-room, where it can be seen by all the scholars. It is both encouragement and relief to them. It has an effect upon the pupils, just like that of mile-stones upon travellers. Men and children have a wonderful power of adapting themselves to circumstances, but with all their flexibility, neither child nor man can ever adapt himself to a state of suspense or uncertainty. All the large schools in the city of Lowell are provided with a clock, which strikes after stated intervals. This is a signal for classes to take their places for recitation, and for reciting classes to return to their seats.

Many school-houses in the country, are situated a hundred rods or more from any dwelling-house. In all cases it is desirable, but in such cases it seems almost indispensable, to have a pump or well, where water for drink and so forth can be obtained. In the summer children usually require drink once in half a day. A hundred rods is too far for them to run in a brief intermission, or for water conveniently to be carried ;—to say nothing of the inconvenience to a

neighbor of having his premises invaded year after year and, perhaps, his gardens and fruit trees thereby subjected to petty depredations.

No children or teacher ought ever to be blamed for having a mud-plastered floor, if mats and scrapers are not placed at the doors of the house.

If there be not a cellar for wood when that species of fuel is used, a shed in which to house it is indispensable.

In the year 1831, the censors of the American Institute of Instruction submitted to that body a "Plan of a Village School-house." As the object of this report is, not so much to present a model for universal adoption, as to explain the great principles which should be observed, whatever model may be selected; I have thought it might be acceptable to accompany this report with the "Plan" which was submitted by the censors as above stated, together with all the material parts of their explanation of it. They are therefore appended. [See the 2d volume of the *Lectures of the American Institute of Instruction*, p. 285, et. seq.]

It will be perceived, that the "Plan" of the censors exhibits a doric portico in front of the house. Such an ornament would be highly creditable to the district, which should supply it. It would be a visible and enduring manifestation of the interest they felt in the education of their children. And what citizen of Massachusetts would not feel an ingenuous and honorable pride, if, in whatever direction he should have occasion to travel through the state, he could go upon no highway nor towards any point of the compass, without seeing, after every interval of three or four miles, a beautiful temple, planned according to some tasteful model in architecture, dedicated to the noble purpose of improving the rising generation, and bearing evidence, in all its outward aspects and circumstances, of fulfilling the sacred object of its erection? What external appearance could impress strangers from other states or countries, as they passed through our borders, with such high and demonstrative proofs, that they were in the midst of a people, who, by forecasting the truest welfare of their children, meant nobly to seek for honor in the character of their posterity, rather than meanly to be satisfied with that of their ancestors? And how different would be the feelings of all the children towards the schools, and through the schools, towards all other means

of elevation and improvement, if, from their earliest days of observation, they were accustomed always to look at the school-house and to hear it spoken of as among the most attractive objects in the neighborhood !

In the preceding remarks, I have suggested defects in the construction of our school-houses only for the purpose of more specifically pointing out improvements. I would not be understood as detracting from, but as attesting to, their usefulness, as they are. Although often injudiciously located, unsightly without, and uncomfortable within, yet, more than anything else, they tend to convert the hope of the philanthropist into faith, and they fill him with a gratification a thousand times nobler and more rational than the sight of all the palaces in the Old World.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

Boston, March 27, 1838.

PLANS OF SCHOOL-HOUSES.

PLATE I.

FIGURE 1.

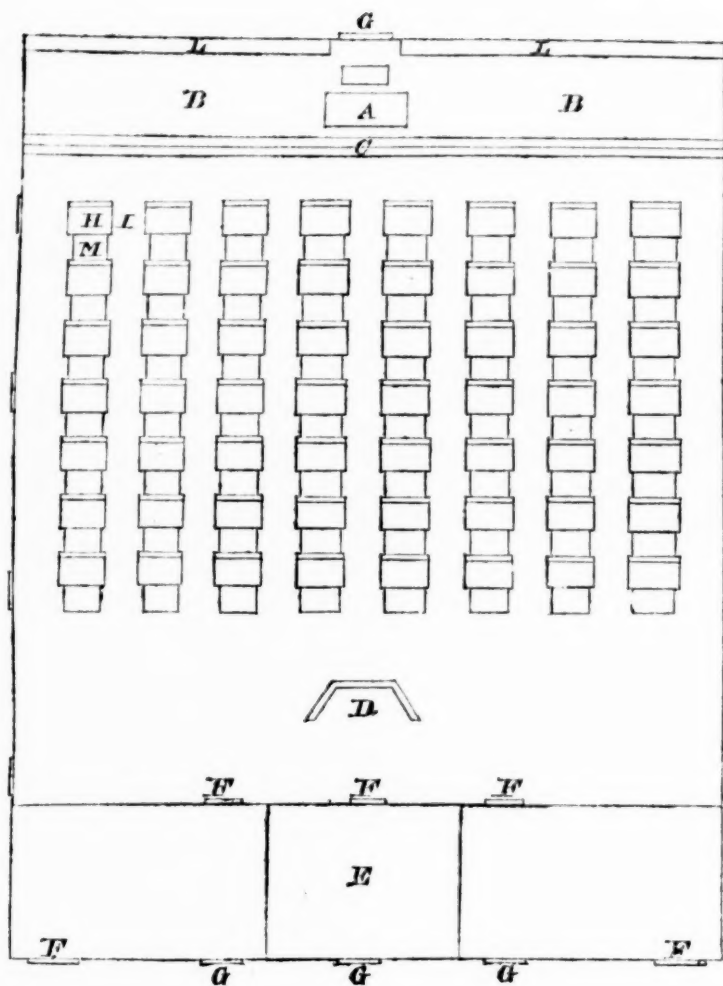


FIGURE II.



EXPLANATION OF PLATE I.

FIGURE I. represents the general plan of a School-House, as recommended in the preceding pages.

- A* Teacher's Desk.
- B B* Teacher's Platform, from 1 to 2 feet in height.
- C* Step for ascending the Platform.
- L L* Cases for Books, Apparatus, Cabinet, &c.
- H* Pupils' single Desks, 2 feet by 13 inches.
- M* Pupils' Seats, 1 foot by 20 inches.
- I* Aisles, 1 foot 6 inches in width.
- D* Place for Stove, if one be used.
- E* Room for Recitation, for retiring in case of sudden indisposition, for interviews with parents, when necessary, &c. It may, also, be used for the Library, &c.
- F, F, F, F, F* Doors into the boys' and girls' entries,—from the entries into the school-room, and from the school-room into the recitation room.
- G, G, G, G* Windows. The windows on the sides are not lettered.

The seats for small scholars, without desks, if needed, to be moveable, and placed as the general arrangements of the school shall render convenient.

Where there is but one teacher, the space between the desks and the entries to be used for recitation. Here, also, is the place for black boards, whether moveable or attached to the wall. This space should be 3, 10, or 12, feet wide, according to the size of the school.

The height of the room should never be less than 10 or 12 feet.

FIGURE II represents an end view of the pupils' Desks and Seats.

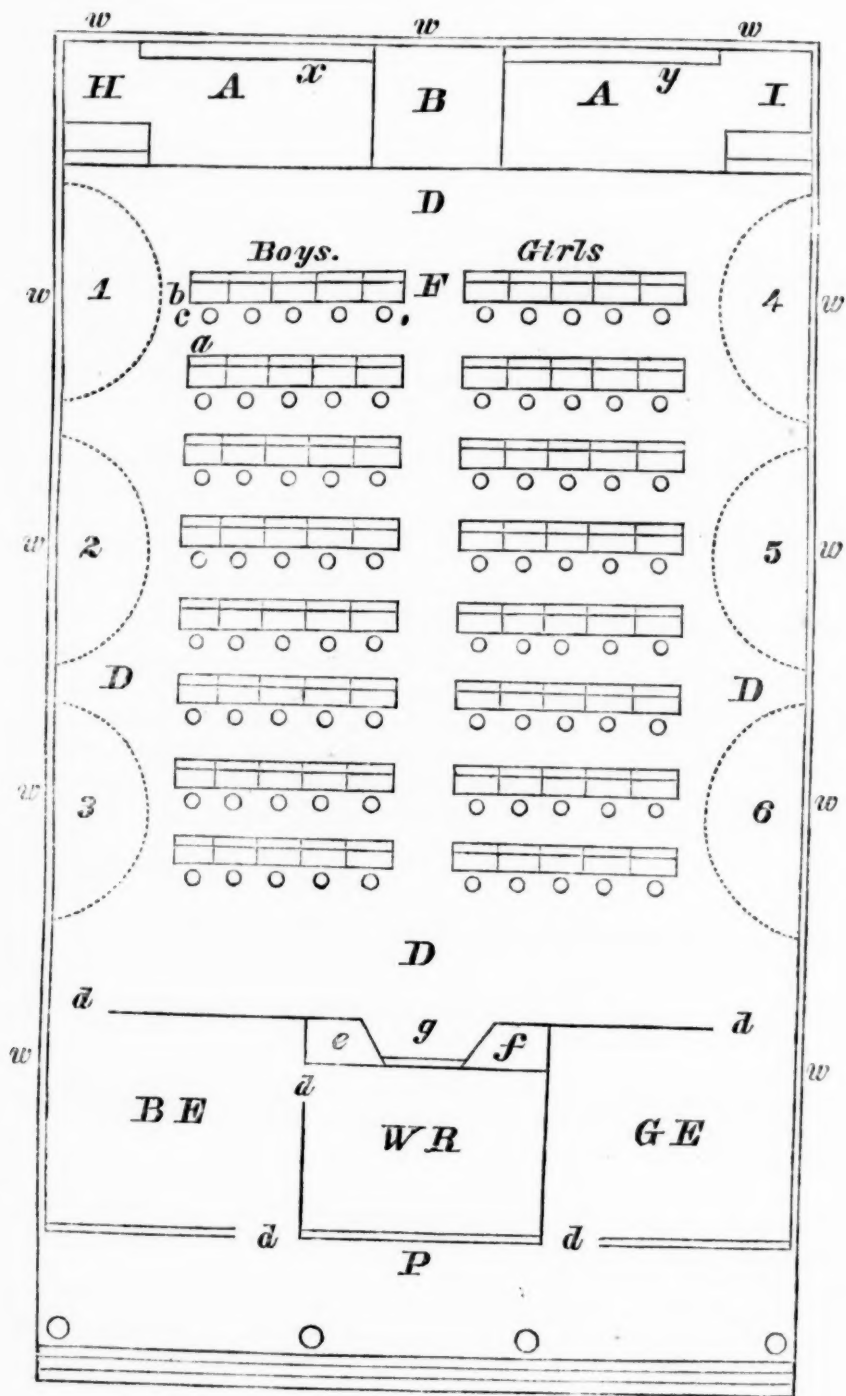
- J* Pupils' Seats.
- K* Shape of the board or plank which forms the side and support of the desks, see page 20, &c.

A light green is perhaps the best color for the scholars' desks and seats, as it is more grateful than any other to the eye. For the outside of the house, white is the color most universally pleasing.

[Note to pp. 30 and 31. It is earnestly hoped that no new School-house will be erected in the country, without a careful inquiry, whether a division and gradation of the schools, as suggested in these pages, be not practicable.

If a union of different Districts for this purpose, be really impossible, then, if the school be large, or likely soon to become so, there should be a separate apartment for the smaller scholars. This may be effected either by having a basement story under the whole or a part of the principal school-room, or by extending the Plan (as represented in Plate I,) and having the doors and entries in the centre, with a room on each side, instead of having them, as in the Plan, at the end of the building.]

PLATE II.



PLAN OF A VILLAGE SCHOOL-HOUSE.

[This is the Plan submitted to the American Institute of Instruction, by their Board of Censors, in 1831, and is the same referred to in the Report, p. 46.]

"Plate II is the ground plan of a village school-house, for both sexes, containing eighty separate seats and desks. Additional seats for small children, who may not require *desks*, can be introduced at pleasure, and the teacher can arrange them in such situations as may be most convenient. For this purpose a sufficient number of light, moveable forms should be furnished.

"The whole edifice, exclusive of the portico in front,—which may be omitted, if a cheap, rather than a tasteful building is required,—is 53 feet long, and 35 feet wide. The dimensions of the *school-room* allow 21 feet of floor to each of eighty scholars, the passages, teacher's platform, &c. being included. It is believed that this allowance is not too liberal,—is not more than is required for the comfort, health and improvement of the scholars."

"The plan here proposed may be enlarged or diminished, for a greater or less number of scholars, according to the following scale:—For ten scholars, add 4 feet to the length; for sixteen scholars, add 4 feet to the width; for twenty-eight scholars, add 4 feet to both length and width. For a less number of scholars, the length or breadth, or both, may be diminished at the same rate.

"The *school-room*, represented in the plan annexed, is 48 feet long, and 35 feet wide, within the walls.

"The floor of the room should be level, and not an inclined plane. Nothing is gained by the common mode of finishing school rooms with inclined floors; and much is lost in symmetry, convenience and comfort. A faithful and active teacher will be about among his scholars, and not confine himself to a fixed seat, however favorably situated for overlooking them.

"Whether there be a stove in the school-room or not, there ought to be an open fire-place, where children may warm and dry their feet. The fire-place should be furnished with a hot-air chamber, to facilitate the ventilation of the room.

"The lids or tops of the scholars's desks are usually made to slope too much. They should be nearly, if not quite horizontal,—an inch to a foot being a sufficient slope.

"Each scholar should have a separate seat, which should be confined to the floor. The seat should be about 13 inches square.

"The *front* rows of seats and desks, or those nearest the master's platform, being designed for the smaller children, should be lower than those near the entries."

"* It may not be amiss to state, that two of the Censors teach large private schools in Boston; and in their respective schools, they allow, for each of their scholars, about 22 square feet of floor, exclusive of entries, dressing-rooms, recitation-rooms, &c. One of the school-rooms is 16 and the other 18 feet high,—the former giving about 350, and the latter about 400, cubic feet of space, to each scholar."

EXPLANATION OF PLATE II.

P Doric Portico in front of the School-house.—*d, d, d, d* Doors.—*BE* Boys' Entry, 12 by 10 feet.—*GE* Girls' Entry, 12 by 10 feet.—*WR* Wood-Room, 11 by 8 feet.—*g* Fire-place.—*e* Closet.—*f* Sink, to be concealed by a falling door balanced with weights.—*D, D, D, D* Passage around the room, 6 feet wide.—*1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6* Stations marked on the floor, to be used by classes, when reciting to monitors.—*ABA* The Teacher's Platform, extending across the room, 6 feet wide and 9 inches high.—*B* A part of the Platform to be removed in the winter, if necessary, to make room for a stove.—*x* Cabinet for apparatus, specimens, &c.—*y* Book-case.—*H* Master's Desk.—*I* Assistant or Monitor's Desk.—*F* Centre Passage; in the plan drawn 3 feet wide, but 4 feet would be better.—*b* Scholars' Desks, 13 inches wide and 2 feet long.—*c* Scholars' Seats.—*a* Passages between the seats and the next row of desks, 13 inches wide. A desk, seat, and passage occupy 4 feet, viz: desk 13 inches, space between the desk and seat 2 inches, seat 13 inches, and passage 15 inches.—*w, w, w, &c.* Windows, which should be placed high from the floor. The scale is about one tenth of an inch to a foot.

PLATE III.

FIGURE I.

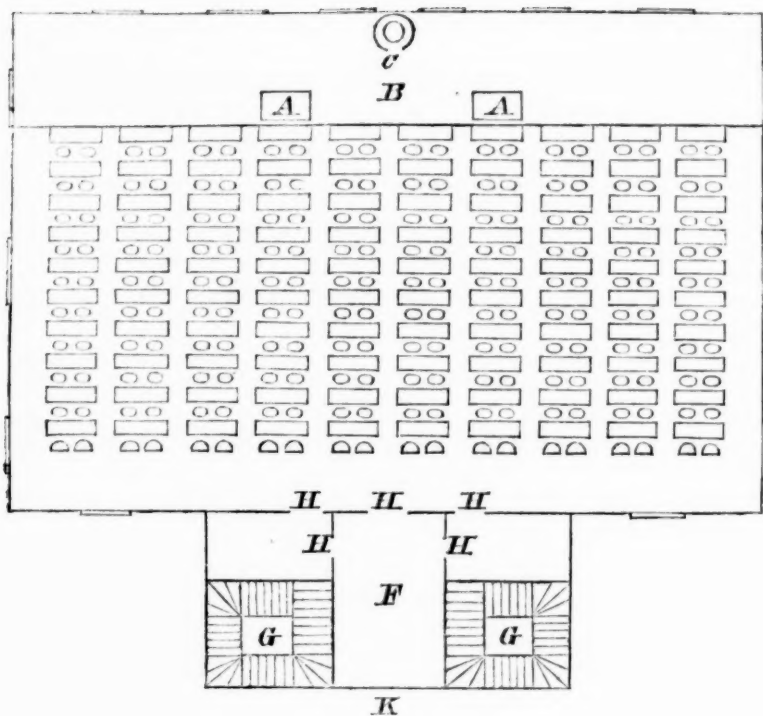
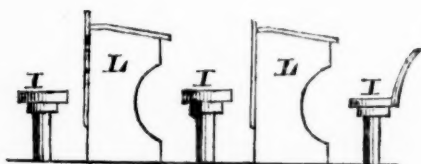


FIGURE II.



EXPLANATION OF PLATE III.

FIGURE I is a Plan of the Second Story of the Wells School-House, in Blossom Street, Boston. The room is designed to accommodate 200 pupils. The pupils' desks are double.

A A Teachers' Desks.

B Platform.

C Stove. The external air is introduced through an opening in the wall, and warmed in its passage.

K Porch.

G G Flights of Stairs.

F Small Ante-room.

H, H, H, H, H Doors.

FIGURE II.

L L An end view of the pupils' desks.

I, I, I Seats. The seats in the back row are chairs. The others are without any support to the back. The scholars are tempted to lean backwards against the next tier of seats, which not only throws them into an unnatural and unhealthful posture, but is also a source of annoyance to others.

The Seats, also, face the strong light of all the windows on one side of the house, see Appendix C.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

Letter from DR. SAMUEL B. WOODWARD, Superintendent of the State Lunatic Hospital, at Worcester. See p. 11.

WORCESTER, March 14, 1838.

HON. HORACE MANN, *Secretary of the Board of Education:*

Dear Sir:—Your note and queries, respecting the construction of school-houses, came to hand yesterday; I improve the earliest opportunity to reply.

First, as to the ill effects of high and narrow benches, and seats without backs.

High and *narrow* seats are not only extremely uncomfortable for the young scholar, tending constantly to make him restless and noisy, disturbing his temper and preventing his attention to his books, but they also have a direct tendency to produce deformity of the limbs.

If the seat is too narrow, half the thigh only rests upon it: if too high, the feet cannot reach the floor; the consequence is that the limbs are suspended on the centre of the thigh. Now, as the limbs of children are pliable or flexible, they are easily made to grow out of shape, and become crooked by such an awkward and unnatural position.

Seats without backs, have an equally unfavorable influence upon the spinal column. If no rest is afforded the backs of children while seated, they almost necessarily assume a bent and crooked position; such a position often assumed, or long continued, tends to that deformity, which has become extremely common with children in modern times—and leads to disease of the spine in innumerable instances, especially with delicate female children.

The seats in school-rooms should be so constructed that the whole thigh can rest upon them, and at the same time the foot stand firmly upon the floor; all seats should have backs high enough to reach the shoulder blades; low backs, although better than none, are far less

easy and useful than high ones, and will not prevent pain and uneasiness after sitting a considerable time. Young children should be permitted to change their position often, to stand on their feet, to march and to visit the play ground. One hour is as long as any child, under ten years of age, should be confined at once; and four hours as long as he should be confined to his seat in one day.

Second Query—"What general effects will be produced upon the health of children by stinting their supply of fresh air, through defects in ventilation?"

An answer to this query, will involve some chemical principles, in connexion with the animal economy, not extensively and fully understood.

The blood, as it circulates through the vessels in our bodies, accumulates a deleterious principle called CARBON, which is a poison itself, and must be discharged frequently, or it becomes dangerous to life. In the process of respiration or breathing, this poisonous principle unites in the lungs with a proportion of the oxygen of the air, and forms *carbonic acid*, which is expelled from the lungs at each expiration. The proportion of oxygen in the air received into the lungs, is about twenty-one in the hundred: in the air expelled, about eighteen in the hundred;—the proportion of carbonic acid in the inhaled air is one part in the hundred, in the exhaled air about four parts in the hundred. By respiration, an adult person spoils, or renders unfit for this vital process, about one gallon of air in a minute. By this great consumption of pure air in a school-room, made tight and filled with scholars, it will be easily seen that the whole air will soon be rendered impure, and unfit for the purpose for which it is designed. If we continue to inhale this contaminated air, rendered constantly worse the longer we are confined in it, this process in the lungs will not be performed in a perfect manner; the carbon will not all escape from the blood, but will be circulated to the brain, and produce its deleterious effects upon that organ, to which it is a poison. If no opportunity be afforded for its regular escape, death will take place in a few minutes, as in strangulation by a cord, drowning, and immersion in irrespirable air. The cause of death, is the retention and circulation of this poisonous principle, in all these cases.

If a smaller portion is allowed to circulate through the vessels than will prove fatal, it produces stupor, syncope, and other dangerous effects upon the brain and nerves. In still less quantity, it produces dullness, sleepiness, and incapacitates us for all mental efforts and

physical activity. The dullness of a school, after having been long in session in a close room, and of a congregation, during a protracted religious service, are often attributable to this cause *mainly*, if not *solely*. Both teacher and scholar, preacher and hearer, are often greatly affected in this way, without being at all sensible of the cause. Fifty scholars will very soon contaminate the air of a school room at the rate of a gallon a minute.

Suppose a school room to be thirty feet square and nine feet high, it will contain 13,996,000 cubic inches of atmospheric air. According to Davy and Thompson, two accurate and scientific chemists, one individual respire and contaminates 6500 cubic inches of air in a minute. Fifty scholars will respire 325,000 cubic inches in the same time. In about forty minutes, all the air of such a room will have become contaminated, if fresh supplies are not provided. The quantity of carbonic acid produced by the respiration of fifty scholars, will be about 750 cubic inches in an hour.

From these calculations, we must see how soon the air of a school-room becomes unfit to sustain the animal powers, and how unfavorable to vigorous mental effort such a contaminated atmosphere must prove to be. To avoid this most serious evil, is a desideratum, which has not yet been reached in the construction of school-houses.

In my opinion, every house and room which is closed for any considerable time upon a concourse of people, should be warmed by pure air from out-of-doors, heated by furnaces placed in a cellar, (and every school-house should have a cellar,) or in some contiguous apartment, so that the supply of air for the fire should not be from the school-room. Furnaces for warming external air, may be constructed cheaply, so as effectually to answer the purposes of warmth and ventilation.

When a quantity of warm fresh air is forced into a school-room by means of a furnace, the foul air is forced out at every crevice, and at the ventilating passages—the currents are all warm quite to these passages.

But if the room is warmed by a stove or fireplace, the cold air from without rushes in at every passage and every crevice, and while the parts of the body nearest the fire are too warm, the current of cold air rushing to the fire to sustain the combustion, keep all the other parts cold and uncomfortable. This is a most direct way to produce disease; nothing can affect the system more unfavorably than currents of cold air coming upon us when quite warm.

I have said that school-houses should have cellars under them. The floor of a building without a cellar is always cold, and often damp; this tends to keep the feet of scholars cold, while the head, in a region of air much warmer, will be kept hot. This is both unnatural and unhealthful. The feet should always be kept warm and the head cool. No person can enjoy good health whose feet are habitually cold. In school-rooms heated by stoves, the feet are very liable to be cold, while the upper stratum of air, kept hot and dry by a long reach of pipe, produces a very unpleasant and unfavorable state of the head—headache, vertigo and syncope often take place in such a room.

The human body is so constituted, that it can bear almost any degree of heat or cold, if the change be not too sudden, and all parts of it be subjected to it alike. We find no particular inconvenience from respiring air at the temperature of 90 degrees on the one hand, or at zero on the other; but inequalities of temperature, at the same time, affect us very differently, and can never be suffered for a long time without danger.

There is one consideration in the preparation of furnaces for warming rooms, that should not be overlooked. The object should be to force into the room a large quantity of air heated a few degrees above the temperature required, rather than a small quantity at a much higher temperature. The air chamber should be capacious, and the passages free. The air should always be taken from out of doors, and never from a cellar. The air of a cellar is often impure itself, and, if pure, a cellar that is at all tight cannot furnish an adequate supply. The whole air of a school-room should be changed at least every hour; if oftener, it would be better. If a cellar is not much larger than the room above it, this supply will soon be exhausted also. The air of the cellar may be sufficient to supply the combustion of the fuel; this is all it should do—and for this purpose it is better than air from out of doors, as the coldness of this checks the heat, and diminishes the temperature of the fire, and its power of heating the furnace.

In giving my views on this subject, I have been so desultory as to embrace nearly all that I can say on the other queries proposed to me. At any rate, my letter is already of an unreasonable length, and I must come to a close. Wishing you every success in the arduous duties of your present station,

I remain truly and affectionately yours,

S. B. WOODWARD.

(B.)

Extract of a Letter from BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, Professor of Chemistry in Yale College, in reply to an inquiry similar to the SECOND proposed to Dr. Woodward.—See p. 58.

“Of our atmosphere, only one fifth part, by volume, is fitted to sustain life. That portion is oxygen gas; the remaining four fifths being azote or nitrogen gas, which, when breathed alone, kills by suffocation. The withdrawing of the oxygen gas, by respiration or otherwise, destroys the power of the atmosphere to sustain life, and this alone furnishes a decisive reason, why fresh air must be constantly supplied, in order to support animal life. But this is not all. Every contact of the air with the lungs, generates in the human subject from 6 to 8 per cent. of carbonic acid gas—the same gas that often destroys the lives of people who descend, incautiously, into wells, or who remain in close rooms, with a charcoal fire not under a flue. This gas—the carbonic acid—kills, it is true, by suffocation, as azote does, and as water acts in drowning. But this is not all. It acts *positively*, with a peculiar and malignant energy, upon the vital powers, which, even when life is not instantly destroyed, it prostrates or paralyzes, probably through the nervous system.

I find by numerous trials, made with my own lungs, that a confined portion of air,—sufficient, however, to fill the lungs perfectly with a full inspiration,—is so contaminated by a single contact, that a candle will scarcely burn in it at all; and, after three contacts, the candle will then go out, and an animal would die in it as quickly as if immersed in azote, or even in water.

It is evident, therefore, that a constant renewal of the air is indispensable to safety as regards life, and no person can be compelled to breathe, again and again, the same portions of air, without manifest injury to health, and, it may be, danger to life.

It follows, then, that the air of apartments, and especially of those occupied by many persons at once, ought to be thrown off by a free ventilation, and, when blown from the lungs, the same air ought not to be again inhaled, until it has been purified from the carbonic acid gas, and its due proportion of oxygen gas restored. This is effected by the upper surface of the green leaves of trees and plants, when acted upon by the direct solar rays. The carbonic acid gas is then decomposed, the carbon is absorbed to sustain, in part, the life of the plant, by affording it one element of its food, while the oxygen gas is liberated and restored to the atmosphere.”

(C.)

Extract of a Letter from DR. SAMUEL G. HOWE, Director of the Institution for the Education of the Blind, in Pearl Street, Boston.—See p. 34.

“ I take it for granted, that the existence of blindness, in the human race, like every other physical infirmity, is the consequence of departure from the natural laws of God ; that the proportion of blind persons in every community is dependent upon the comparative degree of violation of the natural laws ; and that scientific observation can in almost every case point to the kind and degree of violation.

Imperfect vision, partial and total blindness, are more common among men than animals ; and in civilized than in savage or barbarous nations. It seems to be well ascertained, that blindness is more common as we approach the equator ; and that on the same parallel it is more frequent in dry sandy soils, than in humid ones.

It is supposed by some, that in very high latitudes blindness is more frequent than in the temperate zones, on account of the strong reflection of the sun's rays by the snow ; but besides that we have no statistical returns to confirm this opinion, there are other causes which make it doubtful ; the solar rays are much less powerful, the days are short, and the tendency to local or general inflammations and congestions of blood, is much less in cold than in warm climates. Without, however, dwelling upon general rules, I will come at once to causes operating in our own climate.

Any one, who has reflected that man was created with a perfect physical organization—that his eye, the noblest organ of sense, was fitted to reach to a distant star, or to examine the texture of the gossamer's web, will be struck by the fact, that every tenth man he meets is either near-sighted, or far-sighted, or weak-eyed, or has some affection or other of the vision. Now, the frequency of this departure from the natural state of the vision, is not a fortuitous circumstance ; if there were but a single case, it must be referrible to a particular cause ; and, *a fortiori*, when it prevails in every section of the country, and in every generation. Let us consider the greatest derangement of vision—blindness ; there are very few cases, where the eye is totally insensible to light ; let us call every person blind, whose organ of vision is so permanently deranged, that he cannot distinguish the nails upon his fingers : for many persons can see how many fingers are

held up between the eye and a strong light, who cannot see the nails. Of persons blind to this degree, and of those totally blind, there are about one in 2000 in the United States. This calculation is warranted by statistical returns, which are liable to error, only in putting down too few.

Of these 6500 persons, but very few lose their vision by wounds, injuries, or acute inflammation; the great majority are blind in consequence of violation of the natural laws, either by themselves or their parents; for I hold it to be indisputable, that almost every case of congenital blindness, is the penalty paid by the sufferer for the fault of the parent or progenitor. The number of cases of hereditary blindness, and of hereditary tendency to diseases of the eye, which have come under my observation, have established this beyond all doubt in my own mind.

I have known many cases, where a parent, with defective vision, has had half his children blind; and one case, where both parents had defective vision, and all their children, *seven in number*, were blind.

There are, then, causes at work in our own community, which destroy the vision of 1-2000th part of our population, and impair the vision of a much greater part; and although each individual thinks himself secure, and attributes the blindness, or defective vision of his neighbor, to some accidental or peculiar circumstance, from which *he* himself enjoys immunity, yet the *cause* will certainly have its *effect*; the violation of the natural laws must have their penalty and their victim—as a ball, shot into a dense crowd, must hit somebody. It is incumbent, then, upon each one, in his individual capacity, to avoid the remote and predisposing, as well as the immediate causes of impaired vision; and it is incumbent on those, who have an influence upon the condition and regulations of society, to use that influence for the same end.

It would lead to tedious details, to consider the various modes in which each individual or each parent should guard against the impairment of vision; but there are some obvious dangers to which children are exposed in schools, which may be pointed out in a few words.

You will often see a class of children reading or writing with the sun shining on their books, or writing in a dark afternoon with their backs to the window, and their bodies obstructing its little light; and if you tell the master he is perilling the eyesight of his scholars, he thinks he gives you a complete discomfiture, by saying, that he has kept school so for ten years, and never knew a boy to become blind;

nevertheless, it is a cause of evil, and so surely as it exists it will be followed by its effect.

A boy reading by twilight, or by the blaze of a fire, or by moonlight even, will tell you he does not feel the effects; nevertheless, they follow as closely as the shadow upon the substance; and, if ten years afterwards, you see the boy selecting glasses at an optician's, and ask him what caused his imperfect vision, he will tell you that there was no *particular* cause; that is, the amount of evil done at any particular time, was not perceptible—as a toper, whose system is tottering to ruin, cannot believe that any *particular* glass of brandy ever did him any harm.

We should never read but in the erect posture; we should never read when the arterial system is in a state of high action; we should never read with too much or too little light; we should never read with a dazzling light of the sun, or fire, striking on our face.

School-rooms should be arranged in such a manner, that the light of the sun can be admitted in the right direction—not dazzling the eyes, but striking upon the books; there should be facilities for admitting the light fully in dark weather, and for excluding it partly when the sun shines brilliantly.

I believe an attention to the physiology and laws of vision, by parents and instructors, would be of great benefit to children, and diminish the number of opticians; for as surely as a stone thrown up will come down, so surely does exposure to causes of evil, bring the evil, at some time, in some way, upon somebody.

Truly yours,

SAMUEL G. HOWE.

HORACE MANN, Esq.

Secretary of the Board of Education.

SENATE.....

.....No. 26.

FIRST

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Massachusetts,

BOARD OF EDUCATION,

TOGETHER WITH THE

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

Boston:

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS

.....
1838.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HON. MYRON LAWRENCE,
President of the Senate.

SIR,—Agreeably to the provisions of the Act of 20th April, 1837, I transmit herewith to the Legislature the First Annual Report of the Board of Education, together with the First Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board.

I have the honor to be,

With the highest respect,

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD EVERETT,

Chairman of the Board of Education.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, }
1st Feb. 1838. }

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The Board of Education, created by an act of the Legislature, approved 20th April, 1837, ask permission to submit their First Annual Report.

The Board held its first meeting in the Council Chamber in Boston, on the 29th June, 1837. Authority having been given by the law creating the board to appoint a Secretary, the Honorable Horace Mann, late President of the Senate of the Commonwealth, was elected by ballot to that office. It being provided that the Secretary should receive a reasonable compensation for his services, not exceeding one thousand dollars *per annum*, it was unanimously agreed by the board, that this sum should be allowed as his salary; it being understood that he should devote himself exclusively to the duties of his office. On this subject the board will ask permission to make a few observations in the sequel of their report.

The duties of the board as prescribed by the statute are, 1st, to prepare and lay before the Legislature in a printed form, on or before the second Wednesday in January, annually, an abstract of the school returns received by the secretary of the Commonwealth, and 2d, to make a detailed report to the Legislature of all their doings,

with such observations as their experience and reflection may suggest, upon the condition and efficiency of our system of popular education, and the most practicable means of improving and extending it.

The first duty has been discharged. The board at an early day confided to their Secretary the duty of preparing an abstract of the school returns. This abstract has been duly submitted to the Legislature, in a highly convenient form. The recapitulation at its close, supersedes the necessity of presenting in this place any summary of its contents. Imperfect as such a document must necessarily be, it comprises a great amount of valuable information. The board are of opinion, that, by such improvements as experience may suggest, it will be in their power,—if authority be granted to them,—to render it still more instructive and useful. It is respectfully recommended, that power be granted to the board, by the Legislature, to direct such amendments in the mode and time of making the returns, and in the mode of keeping the school-register, as will more effectually answer the purposes for which the returns are directed to be made.

It is made the duty of the Secretary, “under the direction of the board, to collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the common schools and other means of popular education; and to diffuse as widely as possible, throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young.”

The limited powers conferred on the board left them scarce any discretion in the choice of the means, by which they could enable their secretary to discharge his duty as thus prescribed. It was necessary to depend al-

most exclusively on the voluntary co-operation of the people; and no way suggested itself in which this co-operation could be given so effectually, as through the medium of conventions called in each county of the Commonwealth, to be composed of teachers, school-committeemen, and the friends of education generally, deputed from the several towns to attend these conventions. The conventions were so arranged as to time, as to be held successively at convenient intervals throughout the state, in order that the presence of the Secretary of the Board might be given at each county convention. It was the purpose of the board, that these meetings should also be attended by such members of their own body, as from their place of residence were able conveniently to be present, and this,—when other engagements permitted,—has been done.—In pursuance of these views, an address was issued by the board to the people of the Commonwealth, a copy of which will be found subjoined to the report of the Secretary herewith presented.

By way of preparation for the county conventions, a series of questions was prepared by the Secretary, and widely circulated throughout the Commonwealth, for the purpose of drawing forth and concentrating information on the most important points, connected with the subject of education. A copy of these questions is also subjoined.

At the appointed time, the circuit of the county conventions was commenced by their Secretary, and the board feel warranted in saying, that his attendance and public addresses at these meetings were productive of the happiest effects. Seconded by an enlightened zeal for the improvement of education, on the part of those by whom these conventions were attended, it is believed that his services and efforts have been highly instrumental in awakening a new interest in the cause of school educa-

tion. At the semi-annual meeting of the board, on the first day of the present month, a detailed REPORT of his proceedings was submitted by the Secretary, with various observations on the leading topics which had engaged his attention, in the discharge of his duty. This document will be found appended to the present report, and the board refer to it with great satisfaction, as a result of the organization of the Board of Education for the first year of its existence, in the highest degree creditable to its author, and likely to prove equally beneficial to the cause of education and acceptable to the people of the Commonwealth.

It is not the province of the Board of Education to submit to the Legislature, in the form of specific projects of law, those measures, which they may deem advisable for the improvement of the schools, and the promotion of the cause of education. That duty is respectfully left by the board, with the wisdom of the Legislature and its committees, on whom it is by usage devolved. Neither will it be expected of the board, on the present occasion, to engage in a lengthened discussion of topics, fully treated in their secretary's report: to which they beg leave to refer, as embodying a great amount of fact, and the result of extensive observation skilfully generalized. The board ask permission only to submit a few remarks on some of the more important topics connected with the general subject.

1. As the comfort and progress of children at school depend, to a very considerable degree, on the proper and commodious construction of school-houses, the board ask leave to invite the particular attention of the Legislature to their secretary's remarks on this subject. As a general observation, it is no doubt too true, that the school-houses in most of the districts of the Commonwealth are of an im-

fect construction. It is apprehended that sometimes at less expense than is now incurred, and in other cases, by a small additional expense, school-houses much more conducive to the health and comfort, and consequently to the happiness and progress of children, might be erected. Nor would it be necessary, in most cases, in order to introduce the desired improvements, that new buildings should be constructed. Perhaps in a majority of cases, the end might be attained to a considerable degree by alterations and additions to the present buildings. It is the purpose of the secretary of the board as early as practicable to prepare and submit a special report on the construction of school-houses. When this document shall be laid before them, it will be for the Legislature to judge, whether any encouragement can, with good effect, be offered from the school fund, with a view to induce the towns of the Commonwealth to adopt those improvements in the construction of school-houses, which experience and reason show to be of great practical importance, in carrying on the business of education.

2. Very much of the efficiency of the best system of school education depends upon the fidelity and zeal with which the office of a school committee-man is performed. The board deem it unnecessary to dilate upon a subject so ably treated by their secretary. The difficulties to be surmounted before the services of able and faithful school committee-men can be obtained, in perhaps a majority of the towns of the Commonwealth, are confessedly great and various. They can be thoroughly overcome, only by the spirit of true patriotism, generously exerting itself toward the great end of promoting the intellectual improvement of fellow-men. But it is in the power of the Legislature to remove some of the obstacles, among which, not the least

considerable, is the pecuniary sacrifice involved in the faithful and laborious discharge of the duties of the school committee. The board have understood, with great satisfaction, that the subject has been brought before the House of Representatives. They know of no reason why the members of school committees should not receive a reasonable compensation, as well as other municipal officers, of whom it is not usually expected that they should serve the public gratuitously. There are none whose labors faithfully performed are of greater moment to the general well-being. The duties of a member of a school committee, if conscientiously discharged, are onerous; and ought not to be rendered more so, by being productive of a heavy pecuniary loss, in the wholly unrequited devotion of time and labor to the public good.

3. The subject of the education of teachers has been more than once brought before the Legislature, and is of the very highest importance in connection with the improvement of our schools. That there are all degrees of skill and success on the part of teachers, is matter of too familiar observation to need repetition; and that these must depend, in no small degree, on the experience of the teacher, and in his formation under a good discipline and method of instruction in early life, may be admitted without derogating, in any measure, from the importance of natural gifts and aptitude, in fitting men for this as for the other duties of society. Nor can it be deemed unsafe to insist that, while occupations requiring a very humble degree of intellectual effort and attainment demand a long continued training, it cannot be that the arduous and manifold duties of the instructor of youth, should be as well performed without as with a specific preparation for them.

In fact it must be admitted, as the voice of reason and experience, that institutions for the formation of teachers must be established among us, before the all-important work of forming the minds of our children can be performed in the best possible manner, and with the greatest attainable success.

No one who has been the witness of the ease and effect with which instruction is imparted by one teacher, and the tedious pains-taking and unsatisfactory progress which mark the labors of another of equal ability and knowledge, and operating on materials equally good, can entertain a doubt that there is a mastery in teaching as in every other art. Nor is it less obvious that, within reasonable limits, this skill and this mastery may themselves be made the subjects of instruction and be communicated to others.

We are not left to the deductions of reason on this subject. In those foreign countries, where the greatest attention has been paid to the work of education, schools for teachers have formed an important feature in their systems, and with the happiest result. The art of imparting instruction has been found, like every other art, to improve by cultivation in institutions established for that specific object. New importance has been attached to the calling of the instructor by public opinion, from the circumstance that his vocation has been deemed one requiring systematic preparation and culture. Whatever tends to degrade the profession of the teacher in his own mind or that of the public of course impairs his usefulness; and this result must follow from regarding instruction as a business which in itself requires no previous training.

The duties which devolve upon the teachers even of

our common schools, particularly when attended by large numbers of both sexes, and of advanced years for learners, (as is often the case,) are various, and difficult of performance. For their faithful execution no degree of talent and qualification is too great; and when we reflect in the nature of things that only a moderate portion of both can, in ordinary cases be expected, for the slender compensation afforded the teacher, we gain a new view of the necessity of bringing to his duties the advantage of previous training in the best mode of discharging them.

A very considerable part of the benefit, which those who attend our schools might derive from them, is unquestionably lost for want of mere skill in the business of instruction, on the part of the teacher. This falls with especial hardship on that part of our youthful population, who are able to enjoy, but for a small portion of the year, the advantage of the schools. For them it is of peculiar importance, that, from the moment of entering the school every hour should be employed to the greatest advantage, and every facility in imparting knowledge and every means of awakening and guiding the mind be put into instant operation: and where this is done, two months of schooling would be as valuable as a year passed under a teacher destitute of experience and skill. The board cannot but express the sanguine hope, that the time is not far distant, when the resources of public or private liberality will be applied in Massachusetts for the foundation of an institution for the formation of teachers, in which the present existing defect will be amply supplied.

4. The subject of district school libraries is deemed of very great importance by the board. A foundation was made for the formation of such libraries, by the Act of

12th April 1837, authorizing an expenditure by each district of thirty dollars, for this purpose, the first year, and ten each succeeding year. Such economy has been introduced into the business of printing, that even these small sums judiciously applied for a term of years, will amply suffice for the desired object. To the attainment of this end it is in the power of booksellers and publishers to render the most material aid. There is no reason to doubt that if neat editions of books suitable for common school libraries were published and sold at a very moderate rate, plainly and substantially bound, and placed in cases well adapted for convenient transportation, and afterwards to serve as the permanent place of deposit, it would induce many of the districts in the Commonwealth to exercise the power of raising money for school libraries. A beginning once made, steady progress would in many cases be sure to follow. Where circumstances did not admit the establishment of a library in each district, it might very conveniently be deposited a proportionate part of the year in each district successively. But it would be highly desirable that each school-house should be furnished with a case and shelves suitable for the proper arrangement and safe keeping of books. The want of such a provision makes it almost impossible to begin the collection of a library; and where such provision is made, the library would be nearly sure to receive a steady increase.

Although the Board are of opinion that nothing would more promote the cause of education among us, than the introduction of libraries into our district schools, they have not deemed it advisable to recommend any measure looking to the preparation of a series of volumes, of which such a library should be composed, and their distribution,

at public expense. Whatever advantages would belong to a library consisting of books expressly written for the purpose, obvious difficulties and dangers would attend such an undertaking. The board deem it far more advisable to leave this work to the enterprize and judgment of publishers, who would, no doubt, find it for their interest, to make preparations to satisfy a demand for district school libraries in the way above indicated.

In this connection the board would observe, that much good might unquestionably be effected by the publication of a periodical journal or paper, of which the exclusive object should be to promote the cause of education, especially of common school education. Such a journal, conducted on the pure principles of christian philanthropy, of rigid abstinence from party and sect, sacredly devoted to the one object of education, to collecting and diffusing information on this subject, to the discussion of the numerous important questions which belong to it, to the formation of a sound and intelligent public opinion, and the excitement of a warm and energetic public sentiment, in favor of our schools, might render incalculable service. The board are decidedly of opinion, that a journal of this description would be the most valuable auxiliary which could be devised to carry into execution the enlightened policy of the government in legislating for the improvement of the schools, and they indulge a sanguine hope that its establishment will shortly be witnessed.

5. The subject of school books is perhaps one of more immediate and pressing interest. The multiplicity of school books and the imperfection of many of them is one of the greatest evils at present felt in our common schools. The board know of no way, in which this evil could be more effectually remedied, than by the selection of the

best of each class now in use, and a formal recommendation of them by the Board of Education. Such a recommendation would probably cause them to be generally adopted; but should this not prove effectual, and the evil be found to continue, it might hereafter be deemed expedient to require the use of the books thus recommended, as a condition of receiving a share of the benefit of the school fund.

The foregoing observations are all that now occur to the Board of Education, as proper to be made to the Legislature, in connection with the improvement of our common schools. They beg leave to submit an additional remark on the subject of their own sphere of operations. It is evident, from the nature of the case, that much of the efficiency and usefulness of the board must depend on the zeal and fidelity of its secretary, and that it is all important to command, in this office, the services of an individual of distinguished talent and unquestioned character. No other qualifications will inspire the confidence generally of the people, and without that confidence, it is impossible that his labors or those of the board should be crowned with success. The board ask permission to state, that they deem themselves very fortunate in having engaged the services of a gentleman so highly qualified as their secretary, to discharge the interesting duties of his trust; and they respectfully submit to the Legislature the expediency of raising his compensation to an amount, which could more fairly be regarded as a satisfactory equivalent for the employment of all his time. The board also think that a small allowance should be made for the contingent expenses of the secretary in the discharge of his duties, such as postage, stationary, and

occasional clerk hire. It is just, however, to add, that this proposal for an increase of salary, is made wholly without suggestion on the part of the secretary.

In conclusion, the Board would tender their acknowledgments to their fellow citizens, who, by attending on the meetings of the county conventions, or in any other way, have afforded their cooperation in the promotion of the great cause of popular education. At most of these meetings permanent county conventions for the improvement of education, have been organized. Spirited addresses have in almost every case emanated from the county meetings; well calculated to impart vigor and warmth to the public sentiment in reference to the cause of education. On the whole, the board have reason to hope that an impulse has been given to the public mind on the subject of education, from which valuable effects may be anticipated. It will be their strenuous effort, under the auspices of the Legislature, and as far as the powers vested in them extend, to encourage and augment the interest, which has been excited, and they hope, as they shall acquire experience, that their labors will become more efficient. They do not flatter themselves, that great and momentous reforms are to be effected at once. Where the means employed are those of calm appeal to the understanding and the heart, a gradual and steady progress is all that can be expected;—is all that should be desired. The schools of Massachusetts are not every thing that we could wish, but public opinion is sound in reference to their improvement. The voice of reason will not be uttered in vain. Experience, clearly stated in its results, will command respect, and the board entertain a confident opinion that the increased attention

given to the subject will result in making our system of common school education fully worthy of the intelligence of the present day, and of the ancient renown of Massachusetts.

All which is respectfully submitted by

EDWARD EVERETT,
GEORGE HULL,
JAMES G. CARTER,
EDMUND DWIGHT,
GEORGE PUTNAM,
E. A. NEWTON,
ROBERT RANTOUL, Jr.,
JARED SPARKS.

Boston, February 1, 1838.

NOTE. Reverend Messrs. EMERSON DAVIS of Westfield, and THOMAS ROBBINS of Rochester, members of the Board, were prevented by the distance of their respective places of residence from Boston, from being present at the adjourned meeting of the Board, at which the foregoing report was adopted.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

To the Board of Education.

GENTLEMEN :—

The act of the Legislature, under which you were constituted, authorized the appointment of a secretary, and specifically prescribed his duties in the following words :—*the Secretary “ shall, under the direction of the board, collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the common schools and other means of popular education ; and diffuse as widely as possible throughout every part of the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the education of the young, to the end that all children in this Commonwealth, who depend upon common schools for instruction, may have the best education which those schools can be made to impart.”* Having accepted the office of Secretary of the Board, I entered upon the public discharge of its duties about the close of the month of August last. But before devoting even the brief period of three months to a beginning of the work of “collecting information of the actual condition and efficiency” of about three thousand different public schools and several hundred permanent private schools and academies, I was obliged to return to this city in order to prepare the “Annual Abstract of the School Returns,” which, by a law of the Commonwealth, was to be prepared and laid before the Legislature, in a printed form, on or before the second Wednesday in January inst. :—the labor of that preparation, having, by a vote of the

board, been devolved upon me. This last work has supplied me with almost incessant occupation ever since my return. It soon became a question, therefore, in my own mind, whether I ought not to consider myself debarred, by the briefness of the time, and the magnitude of the labor, from attempting, at this early period, to submit to the board, any report, relative to the "condition and efficiency of our common schools and other means of popular education." But as I was perfectly satisfied, that there were a few classes of facts and some important views, pertaining to this subject, in regard to which a more thorough examination would only supply additional facts of the same kind, and corroborate the same views by additional arguments, I thought it clearly to be my duty not to delay their communication for the sake of presenting them in a less imperfect form, or of fortifying obvious conclusions with cumulative evidence and argument.

I proceed, therefore, to state the principal sources of information consulted, together with some of the facts learned and of the conclusions formed.

Between the twenty-eighth of August and the fifteenth of November last, I met conventions of the friends of education in every county in the state except Suffolk. With the exception of two counties, these conventions were very fully attended, almost all the towns in the respective counties being represented. The character of the conventions for intelligence and moral worth has probably never been surpassed. Selfish and illaudable motives do not tempt men to abandon business and incur expense to attend distant meetings, when no emolument is to be secured nor offices apportioned. A desire to promote a philanthropic object, whose full beneficence will not be realized until its authors shall have left the stage,

must have been the honorable impulse, which assembled them together.

Statements, uncontradicted and unquestioned, publicly made at these conventions, by gentlemen worthy of entire confidence, respecting facts alleged to be within their own personal knowledge, I have considered as worthy of full reliance.

Some weeks before commencing this tour of exploration, I addressed to the school committee of every town, a circular letter, specifying a number of topics upon which information was sought. A copy of that circular, together with the Address of the Board of Education, referred to therein, is appended to this report. Direct written answers have been received from nearly half the towns in the state, together containing more than half its population. This information I regard as of an authentic and official character.

Having, fortunately for this purpose, been so situated as to form a personal acquaintance with very many of those gentlemen, who, for the last ten years, have been members of one or the other branch of our state Legislature, I determined to avail myself, as far as practicable, of this advantage to extend into details, and render more minute and particular my information upon the great subject entrusted to me. I think it not unworthy to be mentioned, that, for this purpose, I adopted a mode of travelling which made me perfect master of my own movements, and rendered it always convenient for me to stop and make inquiries, and to turn off my nearest course, whenever valuable information was supposed to lie on either side of my direct route. In this way I have travelled between five and six hundred miles, besides going to Dukes County and Nantucket. I have been able, by

this means, to inspect the condition of many school-houses ; and I have personally examined or obtained exact and specific information regarding the relative size, construction and condition of about eight hundred of those buildings, and general information concerning, at least, a thousand more. These, together with the school returns, which have been received this year from two hundred and ninety-four out of the three hundred and five towns in the Commonwealth, and such limited correspondence as I have been able to conduct, have been the principal sources of information consulted.

It would be depriving many persons of a most honorable tribute to which they are *completely* entitled ; and it would withhold from the friends of the sacred cause of education one of the highest satisfactions, did I omit to declare, that, neither at the conventions, which have been held in the several counties, nor in my intercourse or correspondence with any one, has there been infused into this cause the slightest ingredient of partizan politics. In regard to this great subject, all have reverted to their natural relations as fellow-men ; discarding strifes about objects which are temporary, for interests which are enduring. In a spirit of harmony and unity, having brought the facts of individual experience and observation into common stock, they have regarded them as a fund, from which the wisest results were to be wrought out by the aid of common counsels.

The object of the common school system of Massachusetts was to give to every child in the Commonwealth a free, straight, solid path-way, by which he could walk directly up from the ignorance of an infant to a knowledge of the primary duties of a man ; and could acquire a power and an invincible will to discharge them. Have

our children such a way? Are they walking in it? Why do so many, who enter it, falter therein? Are there not many, who miss it altogether? What can be done to reclaim them? What can be done to rescue faculties, powers, divine endowments, graciously designed for individual and social good, from being perverted to individual and social calamity? These are the questions of deep and intense interest, which I have proposed to myself, and upon which I have sought for information and counsel.

Our institutions for the education of our children depend for their success not more upon the perfection of their individual parts, than upon their just adaptation and concurrent working. The co-operation of many different agents is essential to their prosperity. In examining the causes of failure, therefore, in a system so extensive and complex, not only ought its several parts to be scrutinized and their details mastered; but the relation and fitness of each wheel to the whole machinery should be scanned; because parts, individually perfect, may counterwork each other from maladjustment, and thus impair or even wholly destroy the desired results. I shall make no apology, therefore, for discarding all speculation and theory, and for descending at once to more useful, though perhaps less interesting, particulars; because nothing, however minute, can be unimportant, which will ultimately affect the value of the product.

I am bound, here, to make a preliminary remark, to be steadily kept in view as a qualification of this entire report. In pointing out errors in our system, that they may be rectified, I wish at the same time, to aver my belief in the vast preponderance of its excellencies over its defects. A specification of the latter, therefore, however extensive,

is not to be understood as questioning the manifold superiority of the former. So, too, in adverting to non-performances of duty in any one class or body of men, or to adverse influences, exerted by any other class, I disclaim all personal implication whatever; believing that the defects are mainly chargeable on the system, rather than the individual; and that, in some points, at least, the errors of the system have been rectified by the fidelity of its administrators.

There are four cardinal topics, under which all considerations, relating to our common schools, naturally arrange themselves. *First* in order is the situation, construction, condition and *number* of the school-houses. I mention the *number* of school-houses under this head, because in populous places, there is a temptation to build too few, and to compact too many scholars into one house; while towns sparsely populated are beset with the opposite temptation, of making too minute a subdivision of their territory into districts; and thus, in attempting to accommodate all with a school-house near by, the accommodation itself is substantially destroyed. In many cases, this pursuit of the incident works a forfeiture of the principal. A school-house is erected near by, but it is at the expense of having a school in it, so short, as to be of but little value.

Secondly, the manner, whether intelligent and faithful, or inadequate and neglectful, in which school committee men discharge their duties.

Thirdly, the interest felt by the community in the education of *all* its children; and the position in which a certain portion of that community stand in relation to the free schools.

Fourthly, the competency of teachers.

First. When it is considered, that more than five-sixths of all the children in the state spend a considerable portion of the most impressible period of their lives in our school-houses, the general condition of those buildings and their influences upon the young, stand forth, at once, as topics of prominence and magnitude. The construction of school houses connects itself closely with the love of study, with proficiency, health, anatomical formation, and length of life. These are great interests and therefore suggest great duties. It is believed that, in some important particulars, their structure can be improved without the slightest additional expense; and that, in other respects, a small advance in cost would be returned a thousand fold in the improvement of those habits, tastes, and sentiments of our children, which are so soon to be developed into public manners, institutions, and laws, and to become unchangeable history. But this topic of school-house architecture is too extensive for present examination. It is my intention, as early as practicable, to prepare a separate report, which shall comprise under one view, and in some detail, the essentials of an edifice devoted to the improvement of the whole life, by improving its beginning.

Secondly. School committee men, both prudential and superintending, occupy a controlling position in relation to our common schools. They are the administrators of the system; and in proportion to the fidelity and intelligence, exercised by them, the system will flourish or decline.

Although it is not always in the power of school committees to introduce into the schools devoted and accomplished teachers; yet it is in their power, and it is a most responsible and solemn part of their duty, not to inflict upon

the children of a whole district the calamity of an ignorant, ill-tempered or profane teacher. It is no trivial arbitrament to decide whether a school shall be a blessing or a nuisance, and therefore the question of a teacher's fitness is not to be guessed at, but solemnly pondered. If the husbandman by any effort of body or of mind, by toil or supplication, could foredoom and predestinate what sort of seasons should spread mildew and barrenness over his fields and leave him empty granaries, or, what should make his pastures luxuriant and heap his garner; he surely would not be content with conjecture, with superficial and scanty inquiry or with hasty decisions. And yet what the seasons are to the fields and crops of the farmer, the teacher is to the children of the school. Nay more; he is season and cultivation also. No part, therefore, of the examination of applicants for schools is form. It is all substance. It is all pregnant with good or evil; because the certificate of the committee is a commission to the teacher, under which he may usurp a place to do but little good, where another would do much; or, under which, perhaps, he may do great and remediless harm, without any admixture of good.

The law of 1826 required school committees to obtain evidence of the good moral character of all instructors, and to ascertain "by personal examination *or otherwise*, their literary qualifications and capacity for the government of schools." In the Revised Statutes, the words "*or otherwise*" were intentionally omitted. Hence the duty of *personal examination* became, in all cases, imperative. So great, however, is the tax, imposed by this requirement upon the time of committees, that, from the best information I have been able to obtain, I am led to believe, that in a majority of instances, the examination

is either wholly omitted or is formal and superficial, rather than intent and thorough.

The engagement of a teacher by the prudential committee, subject to the approval of the committee of the town, is itself a step of great importance ; because there are intrinsic objections to the use of the veto power, by the latter, and it can never be exercised without reluctance and hazard. The prudential committee ought not, therefore, to be compelled to close a bargain at the first offer, but he should have opportunity for full inquiries, or, at least, for availing himself of such information as might come in his way, during the season. The law fixes no time for the election of prudential committee men, when chosen by the districts. In some large districts, through which I passed late in the autumn, that officer had not then been chosen for the current year. When chosen, he could have no opportunity for extended inquiry or discriminating selection, but would be almost compelled to employ the first person whom chance should throw in his way.

Again ; the law expressly requires every teacher to obtain, from the school committee of the town, a certificate of his qualifications, "*before he opens the school.*" This implies, that it is a violation of duty on the part of a teacher to open a school, previously to obtaining such a certificate ; and also, on the part of the town committee, to examine a teacher after he has opened his school, for the purpose of giving him a retroactive certificate. Magistrates and officers might as well enter upon the discharge of their duties, with the expectation of being qualified sometime before or after the close of their official term. The reason for this prohibition upon teachers and committees is unanswerable. After the teacher has in-

truded into the school. without a certificate, other considerations, besides fitness, come in, and strenuously urge, if they do not morally compel, the committee to give him one. Just before a school begins, parents generally make arrangements for dispensing with the personal services of their children. Some take them away from regular and profitable employments. During the first few weeks of a school, the children never study with the same facility, nor are they able to make the same progress, as afterwards. Even men cannot rally and apply their whole mental forces, on the first day of commencing an unaccustomed work. It is a subject of universal regret with good teachers of short schools, that as soon as the school has gathered impetus, it is arrested. A change of teachers, when a school has just opened, is, in itself, a great misfortune ; because different persons have different regulations and different modes of administering them. In all schools, the harness of good order and discipline will chafe a little at first, and some time must elapse before it will sit easy. At the opening of a school, a teacher ought to learn the proficiency of his scholars, for the purpose of arranging classes, and as a basis of judicious advice in regard to advanced studies. In the course of two or three weeks, a teacher of any discernment will get an insight respecting the peculiar temperament and disposition of each scholar, and he will find avenues or open them, by which a readier access can be had to his pupils' minds. A school will but partially develope its powers of advancement, until teacher and pupils become acquainted ; until the standing relations between them are established, and their minds are so mutually fitted into each other as to work without friction. Suppose, at this moment, when the school ought to be under strong headway, the teacher is

presented to the committee for examination and approval; and, in addition to such considerations as those above suggested, the prudential committee enforces the demand of a certificate with the plea, that it is now too late in the season to obtain any better substitute. Now, the painful alternative may be directly presented, either to approve an incompetent teacher, or to reject him and break up the school:—two modes about equally efficient in ruining the school for that season. Between these evils, however, there is a choice;—a badly kept school being worse than none. Yet the first is the branch of the alternative far the most likely to be accepted; because the evil of breaking up the school is instant and impending, while that of its continuance, though greater, is remote; and it is a rule, lamentably prevalent in the actions of men, that when a less but immediate evil comes in competition with one far greater, but more remote, the former prevails. The malignity of the case is, that it enlists all the good motives of the committee on the bad side.

From facts, which have come to my knowledge, I am constrained to believe, that, in *two thirds* at least of the towns in the Commonwealth, this provision of the law is more or less departed from. And in the great majority of cases, where an examination is had, previous to the opening of the school, it takes place on the very eve of its commencement, when the evils above enumerated, must partially ensue from a rejection of the candidate, and, therefore, undue motives in favor of granting a certificate must have a proportionate force.

Another evasion of much rarer occurrence, though of a far more mischievous tendency, is, that the school is kept for the stipulated period, and then the prudential committee

gives the teacher an order on the town treasurer, and the town treasurer pays the money without any certificate ever having been obtained or applied for. Indeed, the relation between the prudential and the town committee, in regard to the employment of teachers, contains in itself an element of variance or hostility, which is oftentimes developed into open rupture, and more often, perhaps, suppressed, by injurious yielding and acquiescence on the part of the latter. So manifest is this tendency, and so unhappy its consequences, that very many judicious men maintain the expediency of vesting the whole power of employing teachers in the town committee.

Another duty of the town committee is that of directing what books shall be used in the schools. There is a public evil of great magnitude in the multiplicity and diversity of elementary books. They crowd the market and infest the schools. One would suppose there might be uniformity in rudiments at least; yet the greatest variety prevails. Some books claim superiority because they make learning easy, and others, because they make it difficult. All decry their predecessors, or profess to have discovered new and better modes of teaching. By a change of books a child is often obliged to unlearn what he had laboriously acquired before. In many important particulars, the pronunciation, the orthography and the syntax of our language changes, according to the authority consulted. Truth and philosophy, in regard to teaching, assume so many shapes, that common minds begin to doubt, whether there be truth or philosophy under any. The advantages of cheapness, resulting from improvements in the art of printing, are intercepted from the public to whom they rightfully belong, and divided among compilers. Over this, as an expensive public mischief, as a general

discouragement to learning, and as a misfortune of the Commonwealth, town committees have no control. But it is still in their power, and it is an important and substantial part of their duty, as enjoined by law, "to direct what books shall be used in the several schools," in their respective towns. When the committee fail in directing what books shall be used, a way is opened for the introduction of books which are expressly prohibited by law, as "calculated to favor the tenets of particular sects of christians." Under such omission, also, the school house may cease to be neutral ground between those different portions of society, now so vehemently contending against each other on a variety of questions of social and national duty. Instances of both kinds have occurred, and were, under such circumstances, to be expected ; because it is the nature of extreme views to make all other truths bow down before the idolized truth. But the liability and the temptation should be cut off. Would the disciples of hostile doctrines look forward, and foresee to what results a breach of the truce in regard to the school-room must infallibly lead, it seems scarcely credible, that each should not agree, in good faith, to refrain from every attempt to pre-occupy the minds of school children with his side of vexed and complicated questions, whether of state or theology ; and that all should not concur, in regard to an evil so self-propagating and ruinous, in enforcing measures, which would bar out the possibility of its occurrence. The only reason, urged by school committees for a non-compliance with the provision of law in relation to selecting books, is, that parents object to the expense of purchasing so many new books, as would give uniform sets to the school. Hence the evil is endued with a self-perpetuating power ; because, as it increases, the obstacle

to its removal increases also. Where a diversity of books prevails in a school, there will necessarily be unfitness and maladjustment in the classification of scholars. Those who ought to recite together are separated by a difference of books. If eight or ten scholars, in geography for instance, have eight or ten different books, as has sometimes happened, instead of one recitation for all, there must be eight or ten recitations. Thus the teacher's time is crumbled into dust and dissipated. Put a question to a class of ten scholars, and wait a moment for each one to prepare an answer in his own mind, and then name the one to give the answer, and there are ten mental operations going on simultaneously; and each one of the ten scholars will profit more by this social recitation, than he would by a solitary one of the same length. But if there must be ten recitations, instead of one, the teacher is, as it were, divided by ten, and reduced to the tenth part of a teacher. Nine tenths of his usefulness is destroyed. The same would be true in regard to most other studies. This irretrievable loss is incurred merely because parents will not agree to procure the best books.

It would seem, beforehand, that no duty of school committees could be more acceptable to parents, than that of enforcing a uniformity of books in all the schools of a town. Every school, where there are no regulations upon this subject, holds out a standing invitation to every book-pedlar and speculator to foist in his books, which may be new, or they may be books whose sheets have been printed for years, but garnished with a new title-page bearing a recent date. The diversity may be aggravated through the intervention of the teacher, who often desires to introduce the books from which he, himself, learnt or has been accustomed to teach. But if the

books are prescribed, all applications for a change must be made directly to the committee, and imposition becomes impracticable, or, at least, the chances of it are very much reduced. While the diversity continues, each succeeding teacher will urge the children to procure his favorite books; the children will importune their parents, and enough of them will prevail to perpetuate the mischief. There cannot be a doubt, that the aggregate expense of books for any given number of years, will be much greater in towns where the committee are thwarted by the parents in the discharge of this duty, than in towns where it is duly performed. In this, as in any other operation or business whatever, the absence of system and pre-arrangement doubles cost and halves profits. Families can rarely remove from one town to another; and, very often, they cannot, even from one district to another in the same town, without incurring the expense of a new set of books for their children. This bears, in every respect, most hardly upon the poor.

Notwithstanding the manifest advantages of a performance of this branch of duty, and the grievous mischiefs resulting from its neglect, it is neglected in about *one hundred towns*, or one third part of the towns in the Commonwealth.

The law further provides, that, in case any scholar shall not be furnished by his parent, master or guardian with the requisite books, "he shall be supplied therewith at the expense of the town." Few things seem more preposterous, than to send children to school or to keep them there, for the purpose of *not* studying. Half a dozen children, stationed in different parts of a school, with nothing to do for want of books, will soon enlist three times their number in the same service. In not less than

forty towns is this duty wholly omitted. Children attend school, surrounded by temptations to mischief and without any means of occupation.

An inquiry into the "regulation and discipline" of the schools is another of the duties enjoined upon the town committee; and so important is this duty in the judgment of the law, that its performance is commanded, not only at the opening and close of the schools, but at each of the monthly visitations. Under this head many points are embraced, vital to the cause of common school education. I will give but a single example. The "regulation" of a school comprises the means of ensuring as much punctuality and regularity as possible in the attendance of all the children in the district. Absences and tardiness are great obstructions to progress. The punctual are injured by them hardly less than the delinquent. In some towns, the excellent practice of keeping daily registers by the teachers, to be exhibited to the committee at each visitation; of holding the scholars to a strict account for all absences, and of discouraging desertion from the school by all other practicable means, has obviated almost all delinquencies of this kind. In other towns, where the attendance upon school is prompted by no motive, nor enforced by any salutary regulation; habits of idleness and truants in the present children are laying the foundations of vagrancy, poverty and vice in the future men.

In connection with this topic of the "regulation" of a school, as one of the means of securing punctuality in the attendance of scholars, it is material to advert to another provision of the law, which makes it the joint and several duty of school committees, resident ministers of the gospel, and selectmen, "in their several towns to exert their

influence and use their best endeavors, that the youth of their towns shall regularly attend the schools established for their instruction." The success attendant upon the exertions of these officers to secure a "regular" attendance upon schools, will appear by the following statement.

The whole number of children, in the two hundred and ninety-four towns which have made returns, who are between <i>four</i> and <i>sixteen</i> years of age is	177,053
--	---------

If from this number we deduct twelve thousand, as the number of children, who attend private schools and academies, and do not attend the public schools at all, there will remain	165,053
--	---------

The whole number of scholars <i>of all ages</i> , attending school in the winter is	141,837
---	---------

The whole number of scholars <i>of all ages</i> attending school in summer	122,889
--	---------

The <i>average</i> attendance in winter is	111,520
--	---------

Do. Do. in summer is	94,956
----------------------	--------

So that the average attendance, in winter of children <i>of all ages</i> , falls below the whole number of children in the state between four and sixteen years of age, who depend wholly upon the common schools	53,533
---	--------

And in summer it falls below that number	70,097
--	--------

That is, a portion of the children, dependant wholly upon the common schools, absent themselves from the winter school either permanently or occasionally, equal to a permanent absence of about one-third of their whole number; and a portion absent themselves from the summer schools, either permanently or occasionally equal to

a permanent absence of considerably more than two-fifths of their whole number.

The average length of all the schools in the two hundred and ninety-four towns heard from, is six months and twenty-five days each, for the whole year. Were the winter and summer terms equal in length, this average would give three months and twelve days and a half to each. But, on account of the voluntary absences from school, the winter term is reduced to the scholars, on an average, to about two months and one week, and the summer term to two months and an inconsiderable fraction; or taking both winter and summer terms, to about four months and one week in the year. And so much as some scholars, dependant upon the common school, actually attend school more, just so much, do others actually attend less.

Were it certain that the number, *one hundred and seventy-seven thousand and fifty-three* was not an over estimate of the children between four and sixteen years of age; and did the returns embrace all the children of all ages attending in all the public schools, it would appear that forty-two thousand one hundred and sixty-four children, wholly dependant upon the common schools, have not, the past year, attended school at all in the summer; and twenty-three thousand two hundred and sixteen, neither in summer nor winter. There is some reason to believe, that from omissions in the returns, and, perhaps, from other causes, the total of the children of all ages, attending all the schools, is rather too low. After making every possible allowance, however, the returns exhibit frightful evidence of the number of children, who either do not go to school at all or go so little as not to be reckoned among the scholars.

In this state, where the traditional habits and usages of the people exact some term of apprenticeship for all arts—except for the most difficult of all, the art of teaching—an intelligent and assiduous committee can do much, by way of counsel and sympathy, to encourage teachers, if not to capacitate them for the discharge of their delicate and arduous work. No person, fitted by nature even for a temporary guardianship of the young, if not specially taught and skilled for his office, can remain in school a single week, without a deep consciousness of incapacity for interesting, guiding, and elevating the beings, entrusted to his tutelage. In this condition of things, the committee are his only resource; and, if they also are incompetent to counsel and enlighten, accident and darkness must preside over the education of our youth.

Another important duty enjoined upon school committees is the visitation of the schools. Such visitations may be a moral incitement to the scholars of great efficacy. Advice, encouragement, affectionate persuasion, coming from such of their townsmen as the children have been accustomed to regard with respect or veneration, will sink deep and remain long in their hearts. Wise counsel from acknowledged superiors makes a deep impress. It comes with the momentum of a heavy body, falling from a great height. The same counsel, if the same could be had, from men, whom the children hold in no respect or esteem, might be remembered only to be ridiculed. The visitations of the committee break in upon the monotony of the school. They spur the slothful and reward the emulous and aspiring. To suppose, that the children in a school will ever feel a keen, impulsive interest in learning, while parents and neighbors are disregarding of it, is to suppose the children to be wiser than the men. The

stimulus of acting under the public eye, though an inferior motive, is still an allowable one, amongst adults. To the mind of the sworn officer, is it not more present than his oath? Do not much of the uprightness and thoroughness brought to the discharge of public duties, depend upon their being performed under public inspection. And why, in regard to children, may we not avail ourselves of this innate sentiment as an auxiliary in the attainment of knowledge; always holding it subordinate to the supreme sentiment of duty? I have heard hundreds of teachers, with one voice, attest its utility. Such visitations by the committee, are not less useful to teachers than to pupils. While all due respect should be accorded to teachers—and certainly no class in the community are more deserving both of emolument and of social consideration, than they—yet as our school system is now administered, we are not authorized to anticipate any more fidelity and strenuousness in the fulfilment of duty from them, than from the same number of persons engaged in any reputable employment. This state employs, annually, in the common schools, more than three thousand teachers, at an expense of more than *four hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars*, raised by direct taxation. But they have not one-thousandth part the supervision which watches the same number of persons, having the care of cattle or spindles or of the retail of shop goods. Who would retain his reputation, not for prudence, but for sanity, if he employed men on his farm or in his factory or clerks in his counting-room, month after month, without oversight and even without inquiry? In regard to what other service, are we so indifferent, where the remuneration swells to such an aggregate?

Being deeply impressed with these views, I inserted in

the circular an interrogatory upon this subject, and wherever I have been, I have made constant inquiries whether this duty of visitation were performed, agreeably to law. I have heard from nearly all the towns in the state. The result is, that not in more than fifty or sixty towns, out of the three hundred and five, has there been any pretence of a compliance with the law ; and in regard to some of these towns, after a reference to the requisitions of the statute, the allegation of a compliance has been withdrawn, as having been made in ignorance of the extent of its provisions.

It would be unjust to attribute the omission even of this important duty to any peculiar deadness or dormancy, on the part of committees, towards the great interest of our common schools. No body of men in the community have performed services for the public, at all comparable to theirs, for so little of the common inducements of honor and emolument. In not more than about one fifth part of the towns, do the committee receive either compensation or reimbursement for devoting from six to sixty days of time to the duties of their office, and for incurring expenses of horse and carriage hire, amounting to *ten* or *twenty*, and sometimes even to *thirty* dollars per annum. Where any thing is given, it rarely exceeds a quarter of the lowest wages of day labor. The towns paying most liberally, I believe, are Falmouth and Sandwich, in the county of Barnstable, where one dollar a day, and six pence a mile for travel, are given. In a very few other towns, the compensation is fixed at seventy-five cents for each visit, (understood to occupy a full half day); in a few more, fifty cents a visit is paid; but in most other cases, it is a small fixed sum to be given to the chairman or the secretary of the committee, or to be divided be-

tween the members of the board;—as in *Lincoln*, ten dollars to the chairman; in *Haverhill* and *Hingham*, ten dollars to the clerk or secretary; in *East Hampton*, eight dollars for the whole board; in *Cummington* and *Wareham*, five dollars for each member: in *Franklin*, three dollars for each; in *Williamsburgh*, once, nine dollars for all, and so forth. To the inquiry, *whether paid or not?* the letter of the answer in some cases, and, in many others, the spirit of it, has been, “*neither paid nor thanked.*” In many cases, where gentlemen have served gratuitously in the office for several years, and have then presented a bill for expenses merely, they have been dropped from the board for the ensuing year: in others, where, after having served for years in succession, and, having been re-elected, they have offered to accept, on condition of receiving half as much as was allowed for working upon the highways, as a means of defraying their expenses, the offer has been rejected by a vote of the town, and the vacancy more cheaply filled. Neither does there seem to be any social consideration attached to the station. While the office of selectman and of representative to the general court, is often an object of avidity, the more useful, responsible, and intrinsically honorable office of school committee man, is shunned as thankless and burdensome. It is not to be disguised, that, in many places, it encounters opposition and reproach, just in proportion to the fidelity with which its obligations are observed. In many of the principal towns in the Commonwealth, committee men have been chosen, year after year, by not more than ten or twenty votes; and, upon their declining, the vacancies have been filled by as small a number. In one town, containing three hundred voters, they were once chosen by three votes. In many places it is strikingly

observable, that persons desirous of certain other offices, are especially wary of this. In others, again, it has been necessary to resort to the expedient of electing persons not present at the meeting, in order that the office might be nominally filled. Other towns, again, have chosen them, in order to avoid the penalty of the law, and to obtain their distributive share of the school fund, with an express understanding that they should discharge none of their duties, except making their return to the Secretary of State.

Dormancy and deadness, therefore, in regard to this plastic institution, now moulding and fashioning the beings upon whom all the interests of society are so soon to devolve, seem chargeable upon the people, who not only deny all remuneration for the loss of time, and even all reimbursement for expenses incurred ; but many of whom thwart and baffle the due administration of the office, and render the duties they impose onerous and unwelcome. Hence it often happens, that the citizens, best qualified for the station, decline its acceptance ; or, having accepted it, they abridge its labors, and thereby curtail its usefulness. Clergymen allege, that their relation to the schools has been modified by recent legislation. Their parishes were once territorial, now they are poll ; and thus the special relation they once sustained to all the schools within their territory, is dissolved. Once they owed a special debt to society for their immunity from taxation ; now that obligation is cancelled. From this or some other cause it has happened, that a public school, kept the whole twelve months in a place where several clergymen were constantly resident, has never been visited by any of them for a succession of years. Public men and professional men decline the service on account

of their various engagements. The industrious aver, that "time is money;" thus alleging a maxim, designed only to enforce a lower duty, as a justification for disregarding a higher; and forgetting that it is no more true that "time is money," than it is that "time is knowledge, or wisdom, or virtue," because it may be converted into the latter, as easily and certainly as into the former. But, I repeat, the fault is in the system, more than in the individuals. At every convention I have attended, from every intelligent individual with whom I have conversed, no opinion has been so universal and emphatic, as that our institution of common schools will continue to languish and cannot be revived, until wise boards of school committee men shall, themselves, be a living exposition of the law; and shall make all its provisions in regard to the "examination of teachers," the "selection" and "supply" of books, the "visitation" and "the regulation and discipline of the schools," and "the habits and proficiency of the scholars," as legible in their actions as on the pages of the statute book.

The law exacts a performance of duty from other municipal officers, under the sanction of a penalty; because, as they receive something by way of fee or per diem allowance, they may well be held amenable for any official delinquency. But the framers of the law prescribing the duties of committee men, must have felt the flagrant injustice of denouncing any penalty for derelictions, when the demands upon time and money were so ample, and the requital nothing. Hence an entire abandonment of duty involves no forfeiture, and subjects to no animadversion. Such abandonment has occurred, and been tolerated and acquiesced in, if not demanded, by public sentiment. At one convention it was stated, openly and

without contradiction, by a gentleman of high respectability, in the presence of his colleagues and others, who must have known the case, that in his town, containing about *forty* school districts, the school committee, for eight or more successive years, had never examined a teacher, nor visited a school. During this long intermission of duty, the children in the public schools passed through *two thirds* of the whole of their school-going life. Many other cases have come to my knowledge, calculated to excite the deepest alarm in every mind, which sees the character of the next generation of men foreshadowed and prophesied in the direction which is given to the children of this.

I feel it my duty, therefore, to submit to the Board of Education the expediency of recommending to the general court, the appropriation of some portion of the income of the school fund, when divided among the towns, as a compensation to school committees for the discharge of duties, so laborious and influential. Were this done, there would then be justice and propriety, certainly in cases of gross delinquency, in subjecting them to legal animadversion ; or, withholding from their respective towns their share of the annual apportionment. This course would relieve the towns from the burden of taxing themselves to pay the committee. The single fact of being obliged to render a written account to the town, of their services, at the end of each year, would prompt to punctuality and fidelity, and create another impulse to duty. It may be said, that in some towns, the money would be paid without much valuable consideration in services rendered ; but this, it is believed, would happen in but few cases, even at first, and would not be lastingly true, any where. Such a provision might require some slight mod-

ification in the constitution of the board of town committees. Indeed, is it not worthy of consideration, whether some plan may not be adopted in distributing the income of the school fund, which would assist towns or districts in purchasing apparatus or school libraries, or in doing some other thing for the benefit of the schools, which they cannot conveniently, or will not ordinarily do without such assistance. The fund would then be a stimulant instead of an opiate.

Could the complement of service be secured from committees as well without compensation, as with it; undoubtedly such unbought efforts would infuse into the system a quicker life and a higher energy; because work is always better done, just in proportion as it is done from a higher motive. But in this case, I am satisfied, that the only alternative presented us is, between a groping and dilatory performance on the one hand, and such faithful, though not wholly disinterested efforts, on the other, as may be commanded for a moderate requital.

It is obvious, that neglectful school committees, incompetent teachers, and an indifferent public may go on, degrading each other, until the noble system of free schools shall be abandoned by a people, so self-abased as to be unconscious of their abasement.

Thirdly. Another topic, in some respects kindred to the last, is the apathy of the people themselves towards our common schools. The wide usefulness of which this institution is capable is shorn away on both sides, by two causes diametrically opposite. On one side there is a portion of the community who do not attach sufficient value to the system to do the things necessary to its healthful and energetic working. They may say excellent things about it, they may have a conviction of its general utility;

but they do not understand, that the wisest conversation not embodied in action, that convictions too gentle and quiet to coerce performance, are little better than worthless. The prosperity of the system always requires some labor. It requires a conciliatory disposition, and oftentimes a little sacrifice of personal preferences. A disagreement about the location of a school-house, for instance, may occasion the division of a district, and thus inflict permanent impotency upon each of its parts. In such cases, a spirit of forbearance and compromise averting the evil, would double the common fund of knowledge for every child in the territory. Except in those cases, where it is made necessary by the number of the scholars, the dismemberment of a district, though it may leave the body, drains out its life-blood. So through remissness or ignorance on the part of parent and teacher, the minds of children may never be awakened to a consciousness of having, within themselves, blessed treasures of innate and noble faculties, far richer than any outward possessions can be; they may never be supplied with any foretaste of the enduring satisfactions of knowledge; and hence, they may attend school for the allotted period, merely as so many male and female automata, between four and sixteen years of age. As the progenitor of the human race, after being perfectly fashioned in every limb and organ and feature, might have lain till this time, a motionless body in the midst of the beautiful garden of Eden, had not the Creator breathed into him a living soul; so children, without some favoring influences to woo out and cheer their faculties, may remain mere inanimate forms, while surrounded by the paradise of knowledge. It is generally believed, that there is an increasing class of people amongst us, who are losing sight of the necessity of securing ample opportunities for

the education of their children. And thus, on one side, the institution of common schools is losing its natural support, if it be not incurring actual opposition.

Opposite to this class, who tolerate, from apathy, a depression in the common schools, there is another class who affix so high a value upon the culture of their children, and understand so well the necessity of a skilful preparation of means for its bestowment, that they turn away from the common schools, in their depressed state, and seek, elsewhere, the helps of a more enlarged and thorough education. Thus the standard, in descending to a point corresponding with the views and wants of one portion of society, falls below the demands and the regards of another. Out of different feelings grow different plans; and while one remains fully content with the common school, the other builds up the private school or the academy. The education fund is thus divided into two parts. Neither of the halves does a quarter of the good which might be accomplished by a union of the whole. One party pays an adequate price, but has a poor school; the other has a good school, but at more than four-fold cost. Were their funds and their interest combined, the poorer school might be as good as the best; and the dearest almost as low as the cheapest. This last mentioned class embraces a considerable portion, perhaps a majority of the wealthy persons in the state; but it also includes another portion, numerically much greater, who, whether rich or poor, have a true perception of the sources of their children's individual and domestic well-being, and who consider the common necessities of their life, their food and fuel and clothes, and all their bodily comforts as superfluities, compared with the paramount

necessity of a proper mental and moral culture of their offspring.

The maintenance of free schools rests wholly upon the social principle. It is emphatically a case where men, individually powerless, are collectively strong. The population of Massachusetts, being more than *eighty* to the square mile, gives it the power of maintaining common schools. Take the whole range of the western and south-western states, and their population, probably, does not exceed a dozen or fifteen to the square mile. Hence, except in favorable localities, common schools are impossible; as the population upon a territory of convenient size for a district, is too small to sustain a school. Here, nothing is easier. But by dividing our funds, we cast away our natural advantages. We voluntarily reduce ourselves to the feebleness of a state, having but half our density of population.

It is generally supposed, that this severance of interests, and consequent diminution of power, have increased much of late, and are now increasing in an accelerated ratio. This is probable, for it is a self-aggravating evil. Its origin and progress are simple and uniform. Some few persons in a village or town, finding the advantages of the common school inadequate to their wants, unite to establish a private one. They transfer their children from the former to the latter. The heart goes with the treasure. The common school ceases to be visited by those whose children are in the private. Such parents decline serving as committee men. They have now no personal motive to vote for or advocate any increase of the town's annual appropriation for schools; to say nothing of the temptation to discourage such increase in indirect ways, or even to vote directly against it. If, by this means,

some of the best scholars happen to be taken from the common school, the standard of that school is lowered. The lower classes in a school have no abstract standard of excellence, and seldom aim at higher attainments than such as they daily witness. All children, like all men, rise easily to the common level. There, the mass stop; strong minds only ascend higher. But raise the standard, and, by a spontaneous movement, the mass will rise again and reach it. Hence the removal of the most forward scholars from a school is not a small misfortune. Again; the teacher of the common school rarely visits or associates except where the scholars of his own school are the origin of the acquaintance, and the bond of attachment. All this inevitably depresses and degrades the common school. In this depressed and degraded state, another portion of the parents find it, in fitness and adequacy, inferior to their wants; and, as there is now a private school in the neighborhood, the strength of the inducement, and the facility of the transfer, overbalance the objection of increased expense, and the doors of the common school close, at once, upon their children, and upon their interest in its welfare. Thus another blow is dealt; then others escape; action and reaction alternate, until the common school is left to the management of those, who have not the desire or the power either to improve it or to command a better. Under this silent, but rapid corrosion, it recently happened, in one of the most flourishing towns of the state, having a population of more than three thousand persons, that the principal district school actually run down and was not kept for two years. I have been repeatedly assured, where every bias of my informants would lead them to extenuate and not to magnify the facts, that, in populous villages and central

districts, where there is naturally a concentration of wealth and intelligence, and a juster appreciation of the blessings of a good education, and where, therefore, the common school ought to be the best in the town, it was the poorest.

Believing that this subject bears very nearly the same relation to the healthfulness of our republican institutions, that air does to animal life, I must solicit for it, in some detail, the consideration of the Board. Our law enacts, that every town containing *five hundred* families, or householders, (taken here to be equivalent to *three thousand* inhabitants, or six persons to a family, on an average,) shall maintain a school, to be kept by a master of competent ability and good morals, "*for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town,*" ten months, at least, exclusive of vacations, in each year, who, in addition to the branches of learning to be taught in the district schools, shall give instruction in the history of the United States, book-keeping, surveying, geometry and algebra; and in towns of *four thousand* inhabitants, the master of such school shall be competent to instruct in the Latin and Greek languages and general history, rhetoric and logic. In this Commonwealth, there are *forty-three* towns, exclusive of the city of Boston, coming within the provisions above recited. I leave this city out of the computation, because the considerations, appertaining to it in connection with this subject, are peculiar to itself. I need only mention, that common schools in Boston, valuable as they are, bear no proportion to the whole means of education and improvement, which they do in the country. These *forty-three* towns contain an aggregate of about *two fifths* of all the population of the state, exclusive of the metropolis. Of these *forty-three* towns, only *fourteen* maintain

those schools "for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town," which the law requires. The other *twenty-nine* towns, in which this provision of the law is wholly disregarded, contain a very large fraction over *one fifth* part of the whole population of the state, out of Boston. These twenty-nine delinquent towns, if we leave out the three cities of Boston, Lowell and Salem, stand in the very front rank of wealth and population. They contain thirty-three thousand five hundred and sixty-six persons between the ages of four and sixteen years. And while the two hundred and ninety-four towns, heard from, raise by taxes for the support of common schools, a sum equal to two dollars and eighty-one cents for each of the one hundred and sixty-five thousand and fifty-three persons supposed to be wholly dependent upon the common schools, these twenty-nine rich and populous towns raise but two dollars and twenty-one cents each, for the thirty-three thousand five hundred and sixty-six children they contain between the ages of four and sixteen years. And so much as these wealthy towns fall short of their contributive share of the two dollars and eighty-one cents, so much must the other towns overrun theirs. In these twenty-nine towns, which do not keep the "town school" required by law, the sum of forty-seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-six dollars is expended in private schools and academies, while only seventy-four thousand three hundred and thirteen dollars is expended for the support of public schools.

The average expense for tuition of all those attending private schools and academies, inclusive of those small and short private schools which are kept in the districts between the winter and summer terms, and which comprise, probably, more than one half of the scholars attend-

ing the whole number, is more than four fold the average expense of those attending the public schools.

In the above computation, respecting towns obliged by law to maintain a school "for the benefit of all the inhabitants," I have included in the class, observant of the law, one town where no such school is yet established, but preparations only are making to open one the ensuing season; and two other towns, where, though such schools exist, yet their accommodations for room, and their provisions for instruction, are so limited, as to render the adoption of arbitrary rules absolutely indispensable, for the exclusion of many children desirous of attending them. The results would have been far more crminating, had I not adopted this most exculpatory construction.

The refusal of the town to maintain the free town school drives a portion of its inhabitants to establish the private school or academy. When established, these institutions tend strongly to diminish the annual appropriations of the town; they draw their ablest recruits from the common schools; and, by being able to offer higher compensation, they have a pre-emptive right to the best qualified teachers; while, simultaneously, the district schools are reduced in length, deteriorated in quality, and, to some extent, bereft of talents competent for instruction.

Some objections are urged, on both sides, to a restitution of our system to its original design; but, as they are anti-social in their nature, they must be dissipated by a more enlarged view of the subject. Citizens, living remote from the place, where the town school would probably be kept, allege the difference in the distances of residence, and the consequent inequality of advantages,

derivable from it, as arguments against its maintenance. They, therefore, resist its establishment, and thus extinguish all chances of a better education for a vast majority of the children in the town, whatever may be their talents or genius. They debar some, perhaps their own offspring, from the means of reaching a higher sphere of usefulness and honor. They forbid their taking the first steps, which are as necessary as the last, in the ascension to excellence. They surrender every vantage ground to those who can and will, in any event, command the means of a higher education for their children. Because the balance of advantages cannot be mathematically adjusted, as in the nature of things it cannot be, they cast their own shares into the adverse scale; as though it were some compensation, when there is not an absolute equality, to make the inequality absolute. The cost of education is nothing to the rich, while the means of it are every thing to the poor.

Even if the argument, against the town school, thus broadly stated, had validity, its force is essentially impaired by the consideration, that this class of schools need not be confined to one fixed place; as the statute expressly provides, that they may be kept "alternately at such places in the town, as the inhabitants at their annual meeting shall determine."

On the other hand, the patrons of the private school plead the moral necessity of sustaining it, because, they say, some of the children in the public school are so addicted to profanity or obscenity, so prone to trickishness or to vulgar and mischievous habits, as to render a removal of their own children from such contaminating influences an obligatory precaution. But would such objectors bestow that guardian care, that parental watchfulness

upon the common schools, which an institution, so wide and deep-reaching in its influences, demands of all intelligent men, might not these repellent causes be mainly abolished? Reforms ought to be originated and carried forward by the intelligent portion of society; by those who can see most links in the chain of causes and effects; and that intelligence is false to its high trusts, which stands aloof from the labor of enlightening the ignorant and ameliorating the condition of the unfortunate. And what a vision must rise before the minds of all men, endowed with the least glimmer of foresight, in the reflection, that, after a few swift years, those children, whose welfare they now discard, and whose associations they deprecate, will constitute more than *five sixths* of the whole body of that community, of which their own children will be only a feeble minority, vulnerable at every point, and utterly incapable of finding a hiding-place for any earthly treasure, where the witness, the juror and the voter cannot reach and annihilate it!

The theory of our laws and institutions undoubtedly is, *first*, that in every district of every town in the Commonwealth, there should be a free district school, sufficiently safe, and sufficiently good, for all the children within its territory, where they may be well instructed in the rudiments of knowledge, formed to propriety of demeanor, and imbued with the principles of duty: and, *secondly*, in regard to every town, having such an increased population as implies the possession of sufficient wealth, that there should be a school of an advanced character, offering an equal welcome to each one of the same children, whom a peculiar destination, or an impelling spirit of genius, shall send to its open doors,—especially to the children of the poor, who cannot incur the expenses of a

residence from home in order to attend such a school. It is on this common platform, that a general acquaintanceship should be formed between the children of the same neighborhood. It is here, that the affinities of a common nature should unite them together so as to give the advantages of pre-occupancy and a stable possession to fraternal feelings, against the alienating competitions of subsequent life.

After the state shall have secured to all its children, that basis of knowledge and morality, which is indispensable to its own security; after it shall have supplied them with the instruments of that individual prosperity, whose aggregate will constitute its own social prosperity; then they may be emancipated from its tutelage, each one to go whithersoever his well-instructed mind shall determine. At this point, seminaries for higher learning, academies and universities, should stand ready to receive, at private cost, all whose path to any ultimate destination may lie through their halls. Subject, of course, to many exceptions;—all, however, inconsiderable, compared with the generality of the rule,—this is the paternal and comprehensive theory of our institutions; and, is it possible, that a practical contradiction of this theory can be wise, until another shall be devised, offering some chances at least of equally valuable results?

Amongst any people, sufficiently advanced in intelligence, to perceive, that hereditary opinions on religious subjects are not always coincident with truth, it cannot be overlooked, that the tendency of the private school system is to assimilate our modes of education to those of England, where churchmen and dissenters,—each sect according to its own creed,—maintain separate schools, in which children are taught, from their tenderest years

to wield the sword of polemics with fatal dexterity ; and where the gospel, instead of being a temple of peace, is converted into an armory of deadly weapons, for social, interminable warfare. Of such disastrous consequences, there is but one remedy and one preventive. It is the elevation of the common schools. Until that is accomplished, (for which, however, they ought to cooperate,) those who are able, not only will, but they are bound by the highest obligations, to provide surer and better means for the education of their children.

It ought not to be omitted, that it is urged, in defence of the private school system, that it is preparing a class of better teachers for the common schools than they could otherwise obtain. Suppose, however, that the common schools were what they should be, could not they prepare the teachers as well ?

I trust I shall not be deemed to have given an undue importance to the different interests involved in this topic, when it is considered that more than *five-sixths* of the children in the state are dependant upon the common schools for instruction, and would have no substitute if they became valueless ; while less than *one-sixth* are educated in the private schools and academies, and these would be educated, even if the common schools were abolished. To hold *one-sixth* of the children to be equal to five-sixths, I should deem to be as great an error in morals as it would be in arithmetic.

The number of scholars, attending private schools and academies (if we allow four thousand for Boston, which omitted to make any return respecting that fact, the present year, but which returned four thousand as the number, last year,) is twenty-seven thousand two hundred and sixty-six, and the aggregate paid for their tuition \$328,-

026 75, while the sum raised by taxation for all the children in the state is only four hundred and sixty-five thousand two hundred and twenty-eight dollars and four cents.

Fourthly. Another component element in the prosperity of schools is the competency of teachers. Teaching is the most difficult of all arts, and the profoundest of all sciences. In its absolute perfection, it would involve a complete knowledge of the whole being to be taught, and of the precise manner in which every possible application would affect it; that is, a complete knowledge of all the powers and capacities of the individual, with their exact proportions and relations to each other, and a knowledge, how, at any hour or moment, to select and apply, from a universe of means, the one then exactly apposite to its ever-changing condition. But in a far more limited and practical sense, it involves a knowledge of the principal laws of physical, mental and moral growth, and of the tendency of means, not more to immediate, than to remote results. Hence to value schools, by length instead of quality, is a matchless absurdity. Arithmetic, grammar, and the other rudiments, as they are called, comprise but a small part of the teachings in a school. The rudiments of feeling are taught not less than the rudiments of thinking. The sentiments and passions get more lessons than the intellect. Though their open recitations may be less, their secret rehearsals are more. And even in training the intellect, much of its chance of arriving, in after life, at what we call sound judgment or common sense; much of its power of perceiving ideas as distinctly as though they were colored diagrams, depends upon the tact and philosophic sagacity of the teacher. He has a far deeper duty to perform, than to correct the erroneous results of intellectual processes. The error in the individual case is of little consequence. It is the false projecting power

in the mind,—the power which sends out the error,—that is to be discovered and rectified. Otherwise the error will be repeated, as often as opportunities recur. It is no part of a teacher's vocation, to spend day after day, in moving the hands on the dial-plate backwards and forwards, in order to adjust them to the true time; but he is to adjust the machinery and the regulator, so that they may indicate the true time; so that they may be a standard and measure for other things, instead of needing other things as a standard and measure for them. Yet how can a teacher do this, if he be alike ignorant of the mechanism and the propelling power of the machinery he superintends?

The law lays its weighty injunctions upon teachers in the following solemn and impressive language: "*It shall be the duty of all instructors of youth, to exert their best endeavors to impress on the minds of children and youth, committed to their care and instruction, the principles of piety, justice and a sacred regard to truth, love to their country, humanity and universal benevolence, sobriety, industry and frugality, chastity, moderation and temperance, and those other virtues, which are the ornament of human society, and the basis upon which a republican constitution is founded; and it shall be the duty of such instructors, to endeavor to lead their pupils, as their ages and capacities will admit, into a clear understanding of the tendency of the above mentioned virtues to preserve and perfect a republican constitution, and secure the blessings of liberty, as well as to promote their future happiness, and also to point out to them the evil tendency of the opposite vices.*" Is it not worthy of the most solemn deliberation, whether, under our present system, or rather, our present want of system in regard to the qualifications and appointment

of teachers, we are in any way of realizing, to a reasonable and practicable extent, a fulfilment of the elevated purposes contemplated by the law. And will not an impartial posterity inquire, what measures had been adopted by the lawgiver to ensure the execution of the duties, he had himself so earnestly and solemnly enjoined?

Wherever the discharge of my duties has led me through the state, with whatever intelligent men I have conversed, the conviction has been expressed with entire unanimity, that there is an extensive want of competent teachers for the common schools. This opinion casts no reproach upon that most worthy class of persons, engaged in the sacred cause of education; and I should be unjust to those whose views I am here reporting, should I state the fact more distinctly than the qualification. The teachers are as good as public opinion has demanded. Their attainments have corresponded with their opportunities; and the supply has answered the demand as well in quality as in number. Yet, in numerous instances, school committees have alleged, in justification of their approval of incompetent persons, the utter impossibility of obtaining better for the compensation offered. It was stated publicly, by a member of the school committee of a town, containing thirty or more school districts, that one half at least of the teachers approved by them, would be rejected, only that it would be in vain to expect better teachers for present remuneration. And, without a change in prices, is it reasonable to expect a change in competency, while talent is invited, through so many other avenues, to emolument and distinction? From the Abstract of the School Returns of this Commonwealth, (which I have this day submitted to the Board,) including Boston, Salem, Lowell, Charlestown and other towns, with their liberal

salaries, it appears, that the average wages per month paid to male teachers throughout the state, inclusive of board, is twenty-five dollars and forty-four cents; and to female teachers, eleven dollars and thirty-eight cents. Considering that many more than half of the whole number of teachers are employed in the counties bordering on the sea, it is supposed, that two dollars and fifty cents a week for males, and one dollar and fifty cents a week for females, would be a very low estimate for the average price of their board, respectively, throughout the state. In the country there would not be this difference between males and females, but in the populous towns and cities it would probably be greater. That of females is purposely put rather low, because there were several towns, where it was not included, by the returns, in the wages. On this basis of computation, the average wages of male teachers throughout the state is fifteen dollars and forty-four cents a month, exclusive of board; or at the rate of one hundred and eighty-five dollars and twenty-eight cents by the year;—and the average wages of female teachers, exclusive of board, is five dollars and thirty-eight cents a month, at the rate of sixty-four dollars and fifty-six cents by the year.

In regard to moral instruction, the condition of our public schools presents a singular, and, to some extent at least, an alarming phenomenon. To prevent the school from being converted into an engine of religious proselytism; to debar successive teachers in the same school, from successively inculcating hostile religious creeds, until the children in their simplemindedness should be alienated, not only from creeds but from religion itself; the statute of 1826 specially provided, that no school books should be used in any of the public schools “cal-

culated to favor any particular religious sect or tenet." The language of the Revised Statutes is slightly altered, but the sense remains the same. Probably, no one would desire a repeal of this law, while the danger impends it was designed to repel. The consequence of the enactment, however, has been, that among the vast libraries of books, expository of the doctrines of revealed religion, none have been found, free from that advocacy of particular "tenets" or "sects," which includes them within the scope of the legal prohibition; or, at least, no such books have been approved by committees and introduced into the schools. Independently, therefore, of the immeasurable importance of moral teaching, in itself considered, this entire exclusion of religious teaching, though justifiable under the circumstances, enhances and magnifies, a thousand fold, the indispensableness of moral instruction and training. Entirely to discard the inculcation of the great doctrines of morality and of natural theology has a vehement tendency to drive mankind into opposite extremes; to make them devotees on one side or profligates on the other; each about equally regardless of the true constituents of human welfare. Against a tendency to these fatal extremes, the beautiful and sublime truths of ethics and of natural religion have a poising power. Hence it will be learnt with sorrow, that of the multiplicity of books used in our schools, only three have this object in view; and these three are used in only *six* of the two thousand nine hundred and eighteen schools, from which returns have been received.

I have adverted to this topic in this connection, not only on account of its intrinsic importance, but on account of its relationship to the one last considered. Under our present system, indeed, this is only a branch of the preced-

ing topic. If children are not systematically instructed in the duties they now owe, as sons and daughters, as brothers and sisters, as school-fellows and associates;— in the duties also which they will so soon owe, when, emerging from parental restraint and becoming a part of the sovereignty of the state, they will be enrolled among the arbiters of a nation's destiny; is not the importance immeasurably augmented of employing teachers, who will, themselves, be a living lesson to their pupils, of decorous behaviour, of order, of magnanimity, of justice, of affection; and who, if they do not directly teach the principles, will still, by their example, transfuse and instil something of the sentiment of virtue? Engaged in the common schools of this state, there are now, out of the city of Boston, but few more than a hundred male teachers, who devote themselves to teaching as a regular employment or profession. The number of females is a little, though not materially, larger. Very few even of these have ever had any special training for their vocation. The rest are generally young persons, taken from agricultural or mechanical employments, which have no tendency to qualify them for the difficult station; or they are undergraduates of our colleges, some of whom, there is reason to suspect, think more of what they are to receive at the end of the stipulated term, than what they are to impart during its continuance. To the great majority of them all, however, I concede, because I sincerely believe it is their due, higher motives of action, than those which govern men in the ordinary callings of life; yet still, are they not, inevitably, too inexperienced, to understand and to act upon, the idea, that the great secret of ensuring a voluntary obedience to duty consists in a skilful preparation of motives beforehand? Can they

be expected, as a body, to be able to present to their older pupils, a visible scale as it were, upon which the objects of life, so far forth as this world is concerned, are marked down, according to their relative values? Among the pagan Greeks, the men most venerated for their wisdom, their Platos and Socrates, were the educators of their youth. And after such teachers as we employ are introduced into the schools, they address themselves to the culture of the intellect mainly. The fact that children have moral natures and social affections, then in the most rapid state of developement, is scarcely recognized. One page of the daily manual teaches the power of commas; another, the spelling of words; another, the rules of cadence and emphasis; but the pages are missing which teach the laws of forbearance under injury, of sympathy with misfortune, of impartiality in our judgments of men, of love and fidelity to truth; of the ever-during relations of men, in the domestic circle, in the organized government, and of stranger to stranger. How can it be expected that such cultivation will scatter seeds so that in the language of scripture, "*instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree!*" If such be the general condition of the schools, is it a matter of surprise, that we see lads and young men thickly springing up in the midst of us, who startle at the mispronunciation of a word, as though they were personally injured, but can hear volleys of profanity, unmoved; who put on arrogant airs of superior breeding, or sneer with contempt, at a case of false spelling or grammar, but can witness spectacles of drunkenness in the streets with entire composure. Such elevation of the subordinate, such casting down of the supreme, in the education of children, is incompatible with all that is worthy to

be called the prosperity of their manhood. The moral universe is constructed upon principles, not admissive of welfare under such an administration of its laws. In such early habits, there is a gravitation and proclivity to ultimate downfall and ruin. If persevered in, the consummation of a people's destiny may still be a question of time, but it ceases to be one of certainty. To avert the catastrophe, we must look to a change in our own measures, not to any repeal or suspension of the ordinances of nature. These, as they were originally framed in wisdom, need no amendment. Whoever wishes for a change in effects, without a corresponding change in causes, wishes for a violation of nature's laws. He proposes, as a remedy for the folly of men, an abrogation of the wisdom of Providence.

One of the greatest and most exigent wants of our schools at the present time, is a book, portraying, with attractive illustration and with a simplicity adapted to the simplicity of childhood, the obligations arising from social relationships; making them stand out, with the altitude of mountains, above the level of the engrossments of life;—not a book written for the copy right's sake, but one emanating from some comprehension of the benefits of supplying children, at an early age, with simple and elementary notions of right and wrong in feeling and in conduct, so that the appetites and passions, as they spring up in the mind, may, by a natural process, be conformed to the principles, instead of the principles being made to conform to the passions and appetites.

It is said by a late writer on the present condition of France, to have been ascertained, after an examination of great extent and minuteness, that most crimes are perpetrated in those provinces, where most of the inhabitants

can read and write. Nor is this a mere general fact, but the ratio is preserved with mathematical exactness; the proportion of those who can read and write, directly representing the proportion of criminals, and conversely. Their morals have been neglected, and the cultivated intellect presents to the uncultivated feelings, not only a larger circle of temptations, but better instruments for their gratification.

It is thought by some, that the state cannot afford any advance upon the present salaries of teachers, which we have seen to be on an average, exclusive of board, fifteen dollars and forty-four cents per month for males, and five dollars and thirty-eight cents for females. The valuation of the state, according to the census of 1830, was \$208,360,407 54. During the past season, it has been repeatedly stated, in several of the public papers, and, so far as I have seen, without contradiction or question, that it is now equal to three hundred millions. The amount raised by taxes the current year, for the support of common schools, in the towns heard from, is four hundred and sixty-five thousand two hundred and twenty-eight dollars and four cents, which, if we assume the correctness of the above estimate respecting the whole property in the state, is less than one mill and six tenths of a mill on the dollar.

Would it not seem, as though the question were put, not in sobriety, but in derision, if it were asked, whether something more than one six-hundredth part of the welfare of the state might not come from the enlightenment of its intellect and the soundness of its morals; and yet this would, to some extent certainly, involve the question whether the state could afford any increase of its annual appropriations for schools.

There are other topics, connected with this subject, worthy of exposition, did time permit. I can enumerate but one or two of them in closing this report.

The law of 1836, respecting children employed in factories, is believed to have been already most salutary in its operation. I have undoubted authority for saying, that, in one place, four hundred children went to school, last winter, who never had been before, and whose attendance then was solely attributable to that law. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed (as the law took effect April 1, 1837) to determine whether there is a general disposition to comply with its requirements. So far as I have learned, the accounts hold out an encouraging prospect of compliance on the part of the owners and agents of manufacturing establishments, notwithstanding attempts to evade it, by some parents, who hold their children to be articles of property, and value them by no higher standard than the money they can earn.

From the best information I have been able to obtain, I am led to believe, that there is not more than fifty towns in the state, where any thing worthy the name of apparatus is used in the schools. With few exceptions, Holbrook's common school apparatus, and occasionally a globe, conclude the list. Thus the natural superiority of the eye over all the other senses, in quickness, in precision, in the vastness of its field of operations, in its power of penetrating into any interstices where light can go and come, and of perceiving, in their just collocations, the different parts of complex objects, is foregone. Children get dim and imperfect notions about many things, where, with visible illustrations, they might acquire living and perfect ones at a glance. This great defect will undoubtedly be, to a considerable extent, supplied by the law of

April 12, 1837, which authorizes school districts to raise money by taxation, to be expended for the purchase of apparatus and common school libraries, in sums not exceeding thirty dollars the first year and ten dollars for any succeeding year.

In every county where I have been, excepting two, county associations for the improvement of common schools have been formed. In the two excepted counties, there were teachers' associations previously existing. Measures were taken to make those associations auxiliary to the Board of Education in the general plan of state operations. These county associations, will open a channel of communication in both directions, between the Board as a central body and the several towns and school districts in the state ; and through the Board between all the different parts of the state ; so that improvements, devised or discovered in any place, instead of being wholly lost may be universally diffused, and sound views, upon this great subject, may be multiplied by the number of minds capable of understanding them. Several excellent addresses have already emanated from committees, appointed by these associations or by the conventions which originated them.

If, in addition to these county associations, town associations could be formed, consisting of teachers, school committee men, and the friends of education generally, who should meet to discuss the relative merits of different modes of teaching,—thus discarding the worst, and improving even the best,—but little, perhaps nothing more could be desired in the way of systematic organization. It should be a special duty of all the members of the town associations, to secure, as far as possible, a regular and punctual attendance of the children upon the schools.

Some means of obtaining more precise information respecting the number of scholars, attending the public schools, and the regularity of that attendance, is most desirable. The practice of keeping registers in the schools, indispensable as it is to statistical accuracy, seems to be very often neglected. In preparing the abstract, evidence has been constantly occurring of the want of information, which such registers would have supplied. Sometimes, the committee resort to conjecture; sometimes they frankly avow their ignorance of the desired fact; and sometimes all the sums, set down in several columns of considerable length, have a common multiple, which is incompatible with the diversity of actual occurrences. On the whole, there is, undoubtedly, a very close approximation to truth; and where particulars are so numerous, errors on one side will often balance and cancel errors on the other; excepting where there is some standing bias, when the errors will all be on the gravitating side. Still exactness should be aimed at, as statistics are every day becoming more and more the basis of legislation and economical science. While the state, in the administration of its military functions, establishes a separate department, fills the statute books with pages of minute regulations and formidable penalties, commissions various grades of officers, so that the fact of every missing gun-flint and priming-wire may be detected, transmitted and recorded among its archives, it prescribes no means of ascertaining how many of its children are deserters from what should be the nurseries of intelligence and morality. This is mentioned here with no view of disparaging what is done, but only to contrast it with what is omitted.

Not a little inconvenience results from the fact, that school committees are elected at the annual town meet-

ings in the spring, and are obliged to make their returns in October following. Their returns, therefore, cover but half the time of their own continuance in office, while they cover half the time of the official existence of their predecessors. It is for the Legislature to say, whether there be any good reason, why the time covered by these returns should not be coincident with their duration in office.

In closing this report, I wish to observe, that, should it ever fall under the notice, either of individuals or of classes, who may suspect that some imputation is cast upon them by any of its statements, I wish to assure them, that no word of it has been dictated by a feeling of unkindness to any one. The object of whatever has been said was to expose defects in a system so substantially excellent, as to requite any labor for its reformation; and all the remarks which may seem accusatory of persons connected with it, have caused me more pain to write, than they can any one to read. To have spoken in universal commendation of the system and of its administrators, would have been most grateful, could it have been, also, true; but, in the discharge of a duty, respecting one of the most valuable and enduring of human interests, I have felt, that it would be unworthy the sacred character of the cause, if, to purchase any temporary gratification for others or for myself, I could have sacrificed one particle of the permanent utility of truth.

HORACE MANN,
Secretary of the Board of Education.

Boston, January 1, 1838.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

(Referred to on page 23.)

FELLOW CITIZENS:—At the last session of the Legislature, a Board of Education was established by law, consisting of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor, *ex officiis*, and eight other persons to be appointed by the Executive of the Commonwealth. It was made the duty of this Board to prepare and lay before the Legislature, in a printed form, on or before the second Wednesday in January, annually, an abstract of the School Returns received by the Secretary of the Commonwealth; and the Board was authorized to appoint a Secretary, whose duty it should be, under the direction of the Board, to collect information of the actual condition and efficiency of the Common Schools and other means of popular education; and to diffuse as widely as possible throughout the Commonwealth, information of the most approved and successful methods of arranging the studies and conducting the Education of the Young;—and it was also made the duty of the Board of Education, annually, to make a detailed report to the Legislature of all its doings, with such observations as experience and reflection may suggest, upon the condition and efficiency of our system of popular education, and the most practicable means of improving and extending it.

It will be perceived, that the province of the Board, as constituted by the Legislature, is principally confined to the collection and diffusion of information. The most valuable results may be anticipated from the action of the Legislature and the People of the Commonwealth, upon the subject of Education, when the facts belonging to this all-important interest shall have been collected and submitted to their consideration. The undersigned, members of the Board, are anxious to discharge the duty devolved upon them, to the best of their ability; and no efforts will be spared by the Secretary of the Board, under its direction, to collect and diffuse information on the condition of our Schools, and the means of improving them. It is obvious, however, that, with the limited powers possessed by the Board, the success of its efforts must depend mainly on the general and cordial co-operation of the People; and it is the object of this Address to call upon the friends of Education throughout the Commonwealth to come to the aid of the Board in the discharge of their duty.

It has been judged by the undersigned, that this co-operation can in

no way more effectually be given, than by a Convention to be held in each County of the Commonwealth, at some convenient time in the course of the Summer and Autumn. These Conventions might be attended by Teachers from each town in the County, by the Chairman and other members of the School Committees, by the Reverend Clergy, and generally by all who take an interest in the great duty of educating the rising generation. The liberality of the friends of Education not able themselves to be present, might be honorably employed in defraying the necessary expenses of those of more limited means, who are willing to give their time and personal exertions to the cause. It is proposed that the time of holding these meetings should be arranged by the Secretary hereafter, in such manner as best to promote the public convenience, with a view to general attendance and so as to allow the Secretary to be present at each County Convention. The Conventions will also be attended by those members of the Board whose residence is near the place of meeting. Seasonable notice of the time of holding each County Convention will be duly given, and though the Board respectfully invite the presence of all persons taking an interest in the cause of Education as above suggested, they would also recommend that meetings be held in each town, for the purpose of appointing delegates specially deputed to attend;—and to effect this object a circular letter will be addressed by the Secretary to the School Committee of each town, requesting that a meeting of the friends of Education may be called to appoint delegates to the County Convention.

The conductors of the public press are particularly requested to call the attention of the community to this subject, and to lend their powerful aid in promoting the design of the Legislature in creating a Board of Education. Deeply convinced of the great amount of good which, under Providence, may be effected by carrying that design into execution, the undersigned respectfully recommend it to the countenance of all the friends of Education in the State, and earnestly solicit their support and assistance.

EDWARD EVERETT,
GEORGE HULL,
JAMES G. CARTER,
EMERSON DAVIS,
EDMUND DWIGHT,

HORACE MANN,
EDWARD A. NEWTON,
ROBERT RANTOUL, Jr.,
THOMAS ROBBINS,
JARED SPARKS.

BOSTON, JUNE 29, 1837.

(Blank form of Circular referred to on page 23.)

GENTLEMEN OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE:

I address you as the Secretary of the Massachusetts "Board of Education." The Circular Address of the Board is prefixed. In that, you will perceive, they recommend that a Convention be held in each County of the State, to be attended "by Teachers from each Town, by the Chairman and other members of the School Committees, by the Reverend Clergy, and generally by all who take an interest in the great duty of educating the rising generation." In pursuance of this plan, and after such consultation respecting the time and place as could conveniently be had, it has been concluded to name

the day of next, at 10 o'clock, A. M.,
and the Town of for that purpose, in your
County.

At that time and place you are most respectfully and earnestly invited to attend yourselves, and to procure the attendance of all such other persons, as may be able to enlighten by their counsel or contribute from their experience. It is hoped that each Town will send delegates, as suggested in the Address of the Board. A collection of facts and a developement and discussion of principles is desired, in order that the best methods of education may first be well ascertained and then universally diffused.

In this age, when so much has been done for the melioration of society, by educating new and beneficial truths from an enlarged knowledge of facts, it would be the subject of equal surprise and regret, if the education of youth, from which arises so large a portion of all individual and social good, should be found to be the only thing incapable of improvement.

In order to direct attention to some leading considerations, I take the liberty to add a few inquiries, which you are requested to answer in as particular a manner as your convenience will allow.

1.—Is inconvenience or discomfort suffered from the construction or location of School Houses in your Town, and if so in what manner?

2.—Are the requisitions of law complied with in your Town, in relation to the aggregate length of time in which Schools are kept; the different kinds of Schools kept, and the qualifications of the Teachers employed?

[NOTE.—The requisitions of the law are substantially as follows: Towns containing *fifty* families or householders are required to maintain a School or Schools for terms of time, which shall together be equivalent to *six* months in each year, in which children shall be instructed in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic and good behavior, by teachers of competent ability and good morals.

In towns of *one hundred* families or householders, the same kinds of Schools are to be kept for terms which, together, shall be equivalent to *twelve* months.

In towns of *one hundred and fifty* families or householders, the same kinds of Schools and not less than two, are to be kept for terms not less than *nine* months each, or three or more Schools, for terms together equivalent to *eighteen* months.

In towns of *five hundred* families, similar Schools—not less than two—are to be kept for *twelve* months each, or three or more such Schools for terms, together equivalent to *twenty-four* months; and in addition to the above, they are required to maintain a School for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town, *ten* months at least, exclusive of vacations, in each year, in which the history of the United States, book-keeping, surveying, geometry and algebra shall be taught by a master of competent ability and good morals. And if the town contain four thousand inhabitants, the teacher shall, in addition to all the branches above enumerated, be competent to instruct in the Latin and Greek languages, general history, rhetoric and logic.]

3.—Does your Town choose a School Committee each year? Do they organize as a Committee, and do they visit and examine the Schools, as required by law?

4.—Are School Committee-men paid for their services? If so, how much?

5.—Are Teachers employed for the Public Schools, *without* being examined and approved, or *before* being examined and approved by the Committee?

6.—Do parents, *in general*, exhibit any public interest in the character and progress of Schools, by attending examinations or otherwise?

7.—Do the School Committee select the kinds of books to be used in Schools, or is it left to parents and teachers?

8.—Do the School Committee cause books to be furnished, at the expense of the Town, to such scholars as are destitute of those required?

9.—Is there a uniformity of books in the same School?

10.—Is any apparatus used in your Schools? If so, in how many, and of what kinds is it?

11.—Have any Teachers been employed who practise School-keeping as a regular employment or profession? If any, how many? Are they male or female?

The above questions are not intended to exclude communications upon any other topic which may be deemed important.

Such persons, friendly to the cause of Education, as may be unavoidably deterred from attending the Convention, would perform a public service, by making written communications, upon the above subjects, or others, and forwarding them to the Convention, addressed to the Secretary.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

BOSTON, August 7, 1837.

The matter of publishing cheap
is not new. Hobbs, preceptor to the
late king, on the following acct of the
"British" City it is, that common
sense is not had - see that among
to find out whether a currency made for
to use than a new one made for the
same. He says, I'm afraid but the
you think that the other will give a
pence - see account & cloth the other
not that you find that settle it the
the choice is soon I remain
the matter as it stands for he says
the same issue would even when
of matters which should be
the four more for
the matter which
you can give the
pay the money
the money for
the matter that money
the matter, as well as
the matter is given
the matter is given

SENATE.....

.....No. 13.

SECOND

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Massachusetts.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

TOGETHER WITH THE

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

Boston:

DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS.

.....
1839.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

HON. MYRON LAWRENCE,
President of the Senate,

SIR,—Agreeably to the provisions of the Act of 20th April, 1837, I transmit herewith to the Legislature the Second Annual Report of the Board of Education, together with the Second Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board.

I have the honor to be,

With the highest respect,

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD EVERETT,

Chairman of the Board of Education.

Boston, 14th January, 1839.

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The Board of Education, in conformity with the provisions of the Act of 20th April, 1837, establishing the board, beg leave to submit to the Legislature their Second Annual Report.

In their first Annual Report, it was stated, that, in the absence of specific powers to undertake measures for the improvement of the schools of the Commonwealth, the Board had been led to seek the voluntary co-operation of the friends of education; and, as the best mode of obtaining this co-operation, had invited them to meet the Secretary of the Board, in convention in the several counties of the Commonwealth.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to the Board, that the Legislature should have indicated its approval of this measure by making it the duty of the Secretary, annually to attend a meeting in each county, of all such teachers of public schools, members of school Committees of the several towns, and friends of education generally, as may voluntarily assemble at the time and place designated by the Board of Education.

This duty has been performed agreeably to law, during the past season, in all the counties of the State. The

meetings have been attended, in all cases, by the Secretary, and by those members of the Board whose other engagements permitted them to be present, and generally by a large number of the friends of education. An address on the most interesting topics connected with Education, on the measures recently adopted by the Legislature for its improvement, and on the defects and evils existing in our system of education and their remedies, was delivered by the Secretary at each of these conventions, with general acceptance, and as the Board confidently believe with very happy effect. A more detailed account of these meetings does not fall directly within the province of the Board ; but they beg leave to remark, that they regard the county conventions, sanctioned by the Act of the Legislature of the 21st of April, 1838, as likely to produce, by a gradual and steady operation a most desirable effect upon the public mind. It is not to be expected, that at any one, or any number of these conventions, in any given year, decided results and measures of an imposing and brilliant character should be originated. The cause of education, in free governments, does not admit the production of such results, by violent and transient impulses of public sentiment. But we may reasonably hope for the happiest effects from conventions of this character, held under the direct sanction of the Legislature, once in every year, and in every county of the Commonwealth, by an invitation addressed to all who feel an interest in the formation of the minds and hearts of the young, — an invitation transcending all the party lines, which divide the feelings and judgments of men on other important subjects. The meetings, conducted as they are believed, in all cases, to have been in perfect harmony, have usually been attend-

ed by some of the most respected citizens in the several counties, and will prove, it is hoped, with each succeeding year, still more interesting ; and still more important, as an occasion of collecting and diffusing information on this great topic of common concern.

The subject of schools for teachers has for several years, received a considerable share of the attention of the friends of education in the Commonwealth, and has, on many occasions, been favorably considered by the Committees on Education of the two Houses. The Board of Education, in their former Annual Report, presented the subject to the notice of the Legislature. In the course of the last winter, a communication was addressed, by the Secretary of the Board, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, stating that the sum of ten thousand dollars had been placed at his disposal, by a friend of education, on condition that the Commonwealth would appropriate the same amount ; the sum to be disbursed, under the direction of the Board of Education, in qualifying teachers for common schools. The donation was promptly accepted by the Legislature on the condition named, and the sum of ten thousand dollars was appropriated to the object specified, by a joint Resolve, approved on the 19th April, 1838.

By this joint act of public and private liberality, the Board found themselves clothed with a trust of equal importance and delicacy. It was evidently the object of this provision, that the practicability and usefulness of institutions for the education of teachers should be brought to the test of experiment ; and the success of this experiment was likely to have a powerful influence over public opinion in the Commonwealth, on this impor-

tant subject. The particular form, in which the experiment should be made and all the details of the institution or institutions to be established, were left to the discretion of the Board of Education. Neither the individual donation nor the Resolve of the Legislature was accompanied by any specifications on this head. This consideration imposed upon the Board the necessity of proceeding with caution. They felt it an incumbent duty not to hazard the success of this important measure, by any false step hastily taken in the outset. Feeling that institutions for the formation of teachers were relied upon by many intelligent friends of education, as the most important means of improving the character of our common schools,—while the mass of the community were perhaps waiting, with opinions yet undecided, the sure teachings of experience on this subject,—the Board felt that more than usual responsibility rested upon them, for a cautious application of the fund placed at their disposal.

This course was rendered still more necessary, by the want of previously established institutions of the kind in this country, which might serve as a guide. Attempts have been made, it is understood, with considerable success in a sister State, to connect some provision for the formation of teachers, with regular Academical Institutions; but the Board are not aware that Normal schools, properly so called, have as yet been established in any part of the Union. They exist in great numbers in those parts of Europe, where the greatest attention has been paid to the subject of education, and they are regarded as highly important parts of the system of public instruction; but the condition of our country differs so greatly from that of Europe, in reference to the demand for teachers, and their compensation,—to the resources for

the support of public institutions and to the authorities, by which they are to be established, that it rarely is practicable to imitate, to any great extent, the details of European establishments. It is not often either possible or desirable, to do more than derive useful hints from their institutions for the organization or modifications of ours.

One of the first questions that presented itself for the consideration of the Board, was, whether the whole sum placed at their disposal should be expended upon a single experiment, or whether more than one institution should be put in operation at the same time, in different parts of the Commonwealth. After mature deliberation, the latter course was decided upon. Although, as has been already observed, the terms of the Resolve contained no direction to the Board in this or any other respect, yet it was thought that the Legislature, in the language employed, intimated a preference to the most extensive measures, which the nature of the case, and the means at command, admitted. The fund was to be "expended in qualifying teachers for the common schools of Massachusetts." Had the Legislature contemplated the establishment simply of a single institution,—of one Normal school,—it was supposed that such a purpose would have been made more apparent by some terms of limitation in their Resolve.

It was further considered that the sum of money at the disposition of the Board, though reflecting the greatest credit on the public and private munificence by which it was furnished, was evidently not to be regarded as a permanent endowment. No authority was given for its investment; nor would it, if invested in buildings, fixtures, a library, and an apparatus, have left a fund adequate to the salaries of teachers even for a single institu-

tion. It was at the same time, fully sufficient for the establishment of several Normal schools in different parts of the Commonwealth, provided with means for carrying on a fair experiment in the education of teachers, for a sufficient length of time to bring the usefulness of such institutions to the test of experience. The Board had the means of knowing, that such a distribution of the fund was approved by the individual, whose liberal provision had been accepted by the Legislature, as it appeared to them, as has been observed, to meet the views, rather intimated than distinctly set forth, in the Resolve of the General Court, and the report of the Committee on Education of the House of Representatives, with which the Resolve originated.

It was accordingly decided by the Board to establish three or four Normal schools in different parts of the Commonwealth ; as soon as arrangements could be made for the purpose. It was supposed that the sum of twenty thousand dollars, with the assistance which might be expected from the friends of education, in a manner which will be presently spoken of, would be sufficient to put in operation and to sustain for three years, at least, this number of Normal schools in different parts of the State, and thus bring fairly within the reach of the people the means of partaking their advantages and estimating their usefulness, with a view to the question of their final adoption or rejection as a constituent part of the system of school education. The Board would have been glad to go further, and to make arrangements for establishing a Normal school in every county of the Commonwealth, but the funds at their disposal evidently made this impossible. It was their duty, on the one hand, to give to as large a portion of the people, as possible, on equal

terms, an opportunity of witnessing and trying the experiment, and at the same time not to fritter away the fund, by too minute a distribution.

Should one school only be founded, in whatever part of the Commonwealth it were placed, it would be difficult of access to the major part of those of both sexes, who would be desirous of enjoying its advantages. The class of young men and women who devote themselves, generally for the early part of life to the business of instruction, and who would be likely to seek the advantages of a Normal school, would be somewhat deterred by the expense of a journey to a remote part of the State, and the inconvenience of a residence at a great distance from home. The effect of this would be unfavorable to the main design of the experiment, which is to bring home to the majority of the citizens of Massachusetts the usefulness of institutions for the education of teachers, and to place it in such a light before the people, that they will eventually be disposed to make provision in every county of the Commonwealth, for the means of qualifying all the teachers required for their common schools.

In addition to the objections to a single institution already alluded to, and to the local jealousy, of which it might possibly be the object, in those parts of the State distant from the place of its establishment, the Board felt unwilling to stake the entire success of the experiment on the result of one trial. In an institution of a novel character,—(and of course not capable of being carried on by the momentum which exists in a system of long established and familiar institutions, and enables them to survive the effects of temporary and local mismanagement,)—the consequences of error at the outset would be fatal. Permanent injury would be done to the

cause of education in this community, should the entire fund provided for this interesting purpose be exhausted upon one establishment, and should that fail from any mismanagement, to win the public confidence.

In avoiding these risks of a single establishment, it was deemed an object by the Board to secure the other manifest advantages of a plurality. Besides those already alluded to, the establishment of three, and if found practicable, of four schools, would effect another object of considerable importance. The Board soon ascertained that in some parts of the community, and by some of the friends of education, it was deemed advisable to make the commencement with a school for the instruction of female teachers. It was doubtful, however, whether the public at large would have been satisfied with the establishment of a single school exclusively for their qualification. A school exclusively for males would have been open to still more forcible objections of the same character;—and no experiment would probably have been deemed complete, which was limited to an establishment for either sex exclusively. How far it may be deemed expedient to establish schools where both sexes shall be admitted, must depend on public opinion in the section of the State where the school may be placed; and on this point the Board are unable as yet to form a definite opinion. Where no objection is made to the admission of both sexes, there will of course be a convenience in organizing the school on this principle.

As soon as it was generally understood, that a fund for the establishment of Normal schools had been placed at the disposition of the Board, considerable interest was manifested on the subject of their location; and wishes were early indicated in behalf of different places, that they

might be selected for this purpose. The first movement of this kind was made from the county of Plymouth. A highly respectable Committee of the convention of the friends of education, in that county, appeared before the Board, at their annual meeting in May, with a view to a conference on this subject. At the same meeting, a conference on the same subject was held by the Board with the Hon. J. J. Fiske, of Wrentham, since deceased, who appeared in behalf of a portion of the citizens of that place, desirous of some arrangement, which might connect the establishment of a Normal school with the Academy at Wrentham. About the same time similar overtures were made to the Board by a Committee of the Trustees of Dummer Academy, at Byfield, in the county of Essex. At a subsequent period, more or less direct applications have been made in behalf of Barre, Southbridge, and Lancaster in Worcester county, of Topsfield in Essex county, of Concord and Lexington in Middlesex, of Worthington in Hampshire, of New Salem and Northfield in Franklin, and of Braintree in Norfolk. There was abundant reason to conclude, that, in proportion as the public attention should be called to the subject, there would be the same desire felt and expressed, for the establishment of Normal schools, in other parts of the Commonwealth.

It could not but be gratifying to the Board of Education, to receive these proofs of an extensive, and rapidly increasing interest on this subject. It imposed upon them, however, the necessity of selecting between places, which on the ground of geographical position, were equally advantageous or nearly so. In this state of things it was obviously the duty of the Board to select those places, — having regard to their proper distribution

throughout the Commonwealth,—for the establishment of the Normal schools, where the most liberal co-operation might be tendered, on the part of the citizens. They were led to think, from the opinions entertained and expressed by sanguine friends of the cause in various places, that some of the towns or counties would be disposed, so far to unite their efforts with those of the Board, as to furnish buildings, and fixtures, and a fund towards current charges, provided the expenses of instruction were defrayed out of the means at the disposal of the Board. It was obvious that such a system of co-operation, between the friends of education and the Board, would be productive of the happiest effects. It would secure to the schools to be organized the advantage of a warm and vigilant local sympathy. The public, by whose aid they had been in part established, would feel a greatly enhanced interest in their prosperity. It furnished the most unobjectionable ground of selection between different places, to which the attention of the Board was called; and what was of still greater consequence, it would enable the Board out of the means, under their control, to establish a larger number of Normal schools, than would otherwise be practicable.

These reasons led the Board to bestow the most respectful consideration on the various overtures made to them, and to allow all the time that was desired for those interested to consult their fellow-citizens and ascertain the extent to which co-operation might be expected. In one of the counties it was thought expedient by the friends of education, to take the sense of the people of the towns on the day of the general election, whether they would raise their proportion of the fund proposed. Committees of the Board have visited several towns, on

behalf of which application has been made for the purpose of examining the premises which have been offered to be placed at the disposal of the Board, for the accommodation of a Normal school. Till these preliminary steps had been taken, it was impossible to proceed to the definitive location of a school or schools.

At their last meeting on the 28th December, having received from persons interested in the cause of education, at Lexington in the county of Middlesex, the offer of a building well fitted for the purpose, and of liberal pecuniary co-operation toward the current expenses of the institution, it was determined to proceed forthwith to the establishment of a Normal school, for the education of female teachers, in that place. The situation was deemed as favorable as any one which could be selected, to accommodate the counties of Essex and Middlesex, and generally the northeastern section of the State. The village has all the advantages to be desired, of local situation. Great interest is manifested in the establishment on behalf of many citizens of the place, and the premises placed at the disposition of the Board are convenient and ample.

In the regulations adopted by the Board for the schools to be established, it is proposed that candidates for admission should have attained the age of seventeen years, if males, and sixteen if females, and be instructed, if disposed to continue in the institution so long, for a period of three years. But presuming that this is a longer time than the greater part of candidates would be able to pass at a Normal school, it is designed to arrange a course of study, to occupy a year; at the end of which time a certificate of qualifications will be given to all who have merited it. The course of studies will be designed to effect

two objects. First, the attainment of a more thorough and systematic acquaintance with the branches usually taught in common schools, and an adequate foundation in other parts of knowledge highly useful to the skillful teacher ; and, secondly, the art of imparting instruction to the youthful mind, which will be taught in its principles, and illustrated by opportunity for practice, by means of a model school. The course of instruction will accordingly embrace whatever is required by the statute to be taught in the common schools of Massachusetts, (with the exception of the ancient languages,) and such subsidiary studies as are required in a Normal school, according to the foregoing view of its objects. The principles of Christian ethics and piety, common to the different sects of Christians, will be carefully inculcated ; and a portion of Scripture will be daily read in all the Normal schools established by the Board.

It being made the duty of the Board, to submit to the Legislature an account of the manner, in which the moneys appropriated for qualifying teachers, have been expended, the Board would state, in conclusion of this part of this report, that no disbursements have as yet taken place for this object, nor has any thing been drawn from the treasury.

In the Report of the Secretary of the Board, bearing date January 1st, 1838, and communicated to the Legislature at the last session, the following remark is made : "Not a little inconvenience results from the fact that school committees are elected at the annual town meetings in spring, and are obliged to make their returns in October following. Their returns, therefore, cover but half the time of their continuance in office, while they cover half the time of the official existence of their pre-

decessors. It is for the Legislature to say, whether there be any good reason, why the time covered by these returns, should not be coincident with their duration in office." In conformity with these suggestions, it was provided by the fifth section of a law passed 13th April, 1838, that the form of the blanks, and the inquiries provided for by the statute of the year 1837, and the time when the same shall be returned into the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, shall hereafter be prescribed by the Board of Education. Supposing this authority to have been given to the Board, by the Legislature, for the specific purpose of providing a remedy for the inconvenience alluded to, in the passage just cited from the Secretary's report, the Board at their annual meeting in May last adopted a resolution, that the annual returns of the School Committee should be made on the first day of May in each year. By this arrangement, the returns of each Committee will embrace the condition of the schools for the entire year, during which that Committee has been in office. The Board were, of course, aware, and they regretted, that by the change of the time in making the returns, it would be impracticable to make the annual apportionment of the income of the school fund, at the commencement of the present year. In consideration, however, of the convenience and usefulness of the change, and the greatly increased value which it will give to the returns, they venture to hope that it will be generally approved by the community. The existing provisions of law require, that the income of the school fund shall be apportioned by the secretary and treasurer, and paid over on the 15th of January in each year, to the towns which shall have made the prescribed annual returns, on or before the first day of the preceding November. The change in the

time of making the returns will require a modification of the law on this subject. It will be for the Legislature to decide, whether, in making provision for the apportionment of the income of the fund, on the basis of the returns to be made on or before the first day of May next, it will order the distribution of the additional half year's income, which will then have accrued. Should this be done, no loss will have resulted to the towns from the delay in the apportionment, except a delay of six months in the receipt of a year's dividend ; and even this will be in some measure compensated by a six month's anticipation of one half of the dividend of the following year.

In the former annual report of the Board, some observations were made on the subject of school libraries. As far as the information possessed by the Board extends, scarce any of the districts of the Commonwealth have as yet availed themselves of the authority granted by the act of 12th of April, 1837, to expend for this object, thirty dollars for the first year, and ten for each succeeding year. A confident hope, however, is entertained, that, in proportion as the attention of the districts is called to the subject, and as convenient editions of books well calculated for the purpose, are published, school libraries will begin to be objects of interest throughout the Commonwealth and ultimately be found in all the districts. The opinion was expressed last year, that the preparation of such collections, must be left to the enterprise of intelligent publishers, who, at the present reduced cost of printing, have it in their power, by the circulation of good books, at reasonable prices, to render an inestimable service to the public.

The Board have regarded the law of the 12th of April, 1837, as the necessary result of the school system of

Massachusetts, as it has existed from time immemorial. The previous want of a regular provision for school libraries, must be considered a serious defect in that system. To what avail are our youth taught to read, if no facilities exist for obtaining books? The keys of knowledge are useless to him who has no access to the volumes to be unlocked. Although it is certainly true, that no part of our State is wholly deficient in valuable works of science and literature, yet it must be freely confessed, they do not exist in such plenty as could be desired. In a portion of the towns, there are social libraries. These, it is believed, generally depend on the precarious support of annual subscriptions, and are, too many of them, in a neglected and declining state. They can, of necessity, be conveniently accessible only to that portion of the population, who live near the place where they are deposited. Where they are kept up and supplied with a selection of the valuable works daily issuing from the press, they are universally admitted to be blessings to the community.

By the act of 12th of April, 1837, the Legislature has put it in the power of every district in the Commonwealth to possess itself of this blessing; and the Board regard it as a very interesting part of their duty,—to do whatever may be in their power to facilitate the execution of this law. Among the causes, it is supposed, which have hitherto prevented the districts from availing themselves of the authority to commence the formation of these libraries, is the difficulty of making the selection:—a difficulty of considerable magnitude, when but a small sum is to be expended, and it is necessary to send to some distant place for a supply of books. To remove this obstacle in some degree, the Board of Education determined, at an early period of the present year, to recommend to some

respectable publishing house to issue from the press a collection of works as a common school library, to consist of two series ; the one adapted for the use of children, the other for a maturer class of readers. The proposal has been acceded to by Messrs. Marsh, Capen, & Lyon, of Boston. The enterprise is to be entirely at the expense and risk of the publishers, who agree to execute the works in a style, and to furnish them to those who may choose to become purchasers, at a rate, to be approved by the Board, and which was ascertained to be the lowest, at which an arrangement could be made for its satisfactory execution. Each book in the series is to be submitted to the inspection of every member of the Board, and no work to be recommended, but on their unanimous approval. Such a recommendation, it was believed, would furnish a sufficient assurance to the public, that a sacred adherence would be had to the principle, which is embodied in the Legislation of the Commonwealth, on the subject of school books, and which provides that "school committees shall never direct to be purchased, or used in any of the town schools, any books, which are calculated to favor the tenets of any particular sect of Christians."

It will remain entirely optional, with the school districts, in availing themselves of the authority conferred by the Act of 12th of April, 1837, whether they will purchase the books recommended by the Board. It is by the law left with the discretion of the districts, what rules and regulations may be adopted for establishing and maintaining the libraries authorised to be formed ; and the Board have as little inclination as right to encroach on the exercise of this discretion. It is their purpose only to assist and encourage the publishers in the selection and publication of a series of volumes, well adapted

for the use proposed, to consist of a portion of the most approved works in science and literature, with which our language is enriched, executed in a style, and afforded at a price, which will put them generally within the reach of the school districts of the Commonwealth. The Board have great satisfaction in stating, that, in the preparation of a portion of the books to be published as a common school library, the publishers have been led to expect the assistance of many of the most distinguished writers of our own country.

In submitting their present report, the Board cannot but express their grateful sense of the attention, which was paid by the Legislature of the Commonwealth of the last year, to the various suggestions made in their former report. At no former session of the General Court has a greater interest been manifested in our schools, and the Board are persuaded that the enactments of the last year, will result in their permanent improvement. The school system of the Commonwealth is good, because it is simple. The State provides that the people shall maintain schools, and it organizes a certain machinery for their establishment and supervision. Much of this machinery is in the hands of the school committees. On their fidelity, intelligence, and zeal, it mainly depends whether the schools prosper. In those towns and districts where the committees are composed of intelligent, active, and patriotic citizens, teachers are found to be competent, school-houses are kept in repair, and the rising generation grows up under all the advantages of education, which an anxious parent can desire for a hopeful child. Where the reverse is the case, the whole system falls into disorder and decay. The powers vested in the Board of Education were wisely of a re-

commendatory character. Among the objects which first engaged their attention, were the organization and duties of school Committees. The Act of 13th April, 1838, remedies the greatest of the formerly existing evils,—provides that the official year of the Committee shall coincide with that of their returns,—requires that they shall make an annual report in open town-meeting,—shall keep a record of their proceedings to be transmitted to their successors,—and authorizes a moderate compensation for their labors. With these wise provisions of law, every thing else must be left to the public spirit and Christian zeal of the citizens who assume this important trust.

In conclusion, the Board would express their strong reliance on the wisdom of the Legislature and the intelligence of the people, to continue that favorable regard of the cause of education, which has in all former times been the glory and strength of the Commonwealth. Situated at one extremity of the Union, and occupying but an inconsiderable spot on its surface, what is it that has given to Massachusetts a name and a praise in the land? The Board know of nothing, under Providence, but the principles and institutions of our fathers ;—and among them, as far as mere human influences are concerned, pre-eminently our common schools. With the lapse of time and the progress of events, our importance in all physical relations,—such as territory, material resources, and numbers, is daily growing proportionably less. Of the new States in the West, among whose first settlers within the memory of man were some of our own adventurous citizens, one already greatly outnumbers in population our ancient and venerable Commonwealth. It is doubly incumbent upon us to look well to the sources

of intellectual and moral well-being, and see to it that whatever be the relative rank of the Commonwealth in numbers and wealth, she is determined not to sink to a secondary and degraded place in the scale of mental improvement.

EDWARD EVERETT,
GEORGE HULL,
EMERSON DAVIS,
EDMUND DWIGHT,
GEORGE PUTNAM,
ROBERT RANTOUL, Jr.
THOMAS ROBBINS,
JARED SPARKS,
CHARLES HUDSON.

Boston, 28th December, 1838.

NOTE. At the meeting of the Board of Education, at which the foregoing report was adopted, it was decided, if possible, to make immediate arrangements for the location of another Normal School, in the central portion of the State. Proposals had already been received from those interested in the subject in several towns, and a Committee of the Board had visited them, with a view to further inquiry on the spot. The town of Barre was recommended by various considerations of locality and ease of access. Premises sufficient for the accommodation of the school, were, by a vote of the town, placed at the disposal of the Board, and pecuniary aid toward current expenses, guaranteed on the part of individuals.

The Board, however, having considered that some further provisions for the accommodation of the school would be required, did not feel themselves warranted at their last meeting, in a final decision. The subject was referred to a Committee of the Board, authorized to confer with the Committee of the citizens of Barre, with the understanding, that if the conditions deemed requisite by the Board were complied with, a Normal School should be established in that place. The conditions have been promptly acceded to; and immediate arrangements will be made for the organization of the school.

The Board have understood, that in the section of the State which would furnish the pupils of this institution, no objection would be made to the admission of both sexes. Should this opinion prove to be correct, the school will probably be organized on this principle.

SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN :—

I hereby respectfully submit some account of my proceedings during the last year, in discharging the duties of the office you have confided to me. I should deem it an encroachment upon the province of the Board to advert to such topics in the administration of the school law, as are equally as well known to the Board as to myself;—such, for instance, as the measures they have taken for establishing Normal Schools, for causing school libraries to be prepared, and the designation of the form and time for making the School Returns. I shall, therefore, confine myself to such facts as have come more immediately within my own knowledge, and to the considerations suggested by them.

During the past season, after having given seasonable notice by sending circulars to the school committee of each town in the Commonwealth, I visited the fourteen counties in the State, and, at convenient and central places, have met such of the friends of Education as chose to attend. At a majority of these meetings I have been aided by the presence and cooperation of one or more of the members of the Board. Other distinguished citizens, who, for many years, have received the fullest testimonials of the people's confidence, have been present, and have taken an active and most useful part in the proceedings. Except in the three counties of Hampden, Berkshire and Essex, the conventions have been well attended by school committees, teachers and other friends of Education. The time of the meetings has been occupied by statements, respecting the condition of the public schools, by discussions in regard to the processes of teaching, and by the delivery of one or more addresses.

It appeared from facts ascertained during the last part of the year 1837, and communicated by me to the Board in the report of Jan. 1, 1838, that the Common School system of Massachusetts had fal-

len into a state of general unsoundness and debility ; that a great majority of the schoolhouses were not only ill-adapted to encourage mental effort, but, in many cases, were absolutely perilous to the health and symmetrical growth of the children ; that the schools were under a sleepy supervision ; that many of the most intelligent and wealthy of our citizens had become estranged from their welfare, and that the teachers of the schools, although, with very few exceptions, persons of estimable character and of great private worth, yet in the absence of all opportunities to qualify themselves for the performance of the most difficult and delicate task, which, in the arrangements of Providence, is committed to human hands, were, necessarily, and therefore without fault of their own, deeply and widely deficient in the two indispensable prerequisites for their office, viz., a knowledge of the human mind, as the subject of improvement ; and a knowledge of the means best adapted wisely to unfold and direct its growing faculties. To expect, that a system, animated only by a feeble principle of life and that life in irregular action, could be restored at once to health and vigor, would be a sure preparation for disappointment. It is now twenty years, since the absolute government of Prussia, under the impulse of self-preservation, entered upon the work of entirely remodelling their Common Schools, so as to give them a comprehensiveness and an efficacy, which would embrace and educate every child in the kingdom. In this undertaking, high intelligence has been aided, at every step, by unlimited power ; and yet the work is but just completed ;—in some places and in some circumstances of detail, I believe, not yet completed. Their engine of reform is the command of the sovereign, enforced by penalties ; ours, is the intelligence of the people, stimulated by duty. Their plan has the advantage of efficiency and despatch, but it has this disadvantage, that what the ruler may decree to-day, his successor may revoke tomorrow ; ours has the disadvantage of slowness in execution, but the compensatory advantage of permanency, when accomplished. Besides, if our schools are voluntarily advanced, through the intelligence of the people, the agents themselves will be benefited, almost as much as the objects. These considerations ought to satisfy those persons, who seem impatient of delay and who think that any Board of Education could reanimate our system in one, or even in a few years.

Considering then, the description of the means to be employed for raising our schools to a reasonable and practicable point of usefulness ; it may be confidently stated, that the efforts, which have been made, in different places, have accomplished something already, and have given sure auguries of a speedier progression hereafter.

In my circuit this year, Nantucket was the first place visited. The town contains almost 10,000 inhabitants. When there, the previous season, there was but one set of public schools for all the children. To them, only children over the age of six years were admitted, and no public provision existed for the education of those below. During the last year, the town has established two primary schools for small children, and also a school (as it is denominated in the statute,) for the benefit of all the inhabitants of the town. To the last, pupils are admitted on passing an examination in the branches, required to be taught in the middle or secondary schools. The organization, therefore, is now perfect. The small children are provided for, by themselves. This is an advantage, which can hardly be overestimated. For the purpose of preserving order and silence in schools, composed of scholars of all ages, it becomes almost necessary to practise a rigor of restraint and a severity of discipline upon the small children, which is always injurious and often cruel. The youngest scholars are, constitutionally, most active. Their proportion of brain and nervous system, compared with the whole body, is much the greatest. Their restlessness does not proceed from volition, but from the involuntary impulses of nature. They vibrate at the slightest touch ; and they can no more help a responsive impulse at every sight and sound, than they can help seeing and hearing with open eyes and ears. What aggravates the difficulty is, that they have nothing to do. At a time, when nature designs they shall be more active, than at any other period of life, a stagnation of all the powers of mind and body is enforced. But while the heart beats and the blood flows, the signs of life cannot be wholly suppressed ; and therefore, the steady working of nature's laws is sure to furnish the teacher with occasions for discipline. If it would be intolerably irksome for any of the large scholars to sit still for half a day, in a constrained posture, with hands unoccupied, and eyes looking straight into vacancy, how much more intolerable is

it for the small ones? Hence the importance of having such a gradation of schools, in every place, where it is practicable, as has been lately established in Nantucket. Another invaluable advantage of having three grades of schools is, that while it diminishes, at least one-half, the number of classes in each school, it increases the number in each class, and thus allows the teacher to devote more time to the recitations and to the oral instruction of his enlarged classes. Another point, of great importance to the schools, was well illustrated in the change at Nantucket. When I was there in 1837, a private school was in operation, kept by one of the most accomplished instructors in the State, and sustained at great expense to its patrons. When the arrangement, above referred to, was made, this gentleman was employed by the town to keep the town school. The private school was, of course, given up; but he carried with him, into the town school, most of his former pupils. And he now educates many others, who could not afford the expense of the private school. Although, in such cases, the compensation of the teacher may not be quite as great, nominally, yet it will probably be worth as much; as he will receive it directly from the town, in regular instalments, and will have none of the trouble of collecting bills.

Within the last year, also, every schoolhouse in Nantucket has been provided with a good ventilator and with new and comfortable seats. This leaves little to be desired in that town, in regard to the places, where the processes of education are carried on. Competent teachers, fidelity in the committee, suitable school books, libraries and a good apparatus, and bringing *all* the children within the beneficent influences of the school, will complete the work.

For the town school, an extensive and valuable apparatus has been provided, and also some of a less costly description, for the primary schools. To accomplish these praiseworthy purposes, the town, last year, almost doubled its former appropriation.

Another highly gratifying indication of increased attention to the welfare of the schools, has been given by the city of Salem. A year ago, the schoolhouses in that city, were without ventilation, and many of them with such seats as excited vivid ideas of corporal punishment, and almost prompted one to ask the children, for what offence they had been committed. At an expense of about two

thousand dollars, the seats in all the schoolhouses, except one, have been reconstructed, and provisions for ventilation have been made. I am told, that the effect in the quiet, attention and proficiency of the pupils, was immediately manifested.

In many other places, improvements of the same kind have been made, though to a less extent and in a part only of the houses. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose, that nothing remains to be done in this important department of the system of public instruction. The cases mentioned are the slightest exceptions, compared with the generality of the neglect. The urgent reasons for making the report on schoolhouses, the last year, still continue. In the important point of ventilation, so essential to the health, composure and mental elasticity of the pupils, most of the houses remain without change ; except indeed, that very undesirable change, which has been wrought by time and the elements ;—or such change as has been effected by stripping off the external covering of the house, on some emergency for fuel. The children must continue to breathe poisonous air, and to sit upon seats, threatening structural derangement, until parents become satisfied, that a little money may well be expended to secure to their offspring, the blessings of sound health, a good conformation, and a strong, quick-working mind.

A highly respectable physician, who, for several years, has attended to the actual results of bad internal arrangements and bad locations for schoolhouses, upon the health of the pupils, took measures, during the past summer, to ascertain with exactness, the relative amount of sickness, suffered by the children, in a given period of time, in two annual schools. The schools were selected on account of their proximity, being but a short distance from each other ; they consisted of very nearly the same number of children, belonging to families in the same condition of life, and no *general* physical causes were known to exist, which should have distinguished them from each other, in regard to the health of the pupils. But one house was dry and well ventilated ; the other damp, and so situated as to render ventilation impracticable. In the former, during a period of forty-five days, five scholars were absent, from sickness, to the amount in the whole of twenty days. In the latter, during the same period of time and for the same cause, nineteen children were absent, to an

amount in the whole of one hundred and forty-five days ;—that is almost four times the number of children, and more than seven times the amount of sickness ; and the appearances of the children not thus detained by sickness, indicated a marked difference in their condition as to health. On such a subject, where all the causes in operation may not be known, it would be unphilosophical to draw general conclusions, from a particular observation. No reason, however, can be divined, why this single result should not fairly represent the average of any given number of years. Similar results for successive years, must satisfy any one, respecting the true cause of such calamities ; if, indeed, any one can remain sceptical in regard to the connexion between good health and pure air.

The committee who take charge of the Primary Schools in the city of Boston, established, in the month of September last, a "Model School." To this school it is intended to devote an unusual share of attention. It is under the immediate supervision of gentlemen, intelligent and highly interested in its success. Their object is to select the best books, to learn, as far as possible, the true periods of alternation between study and exercise for young children, and to improve upon existing processes for moral and intellectual training. When their plans are somewhat matured by observation and experience, it is their intention to bring the teachers of the other Primary Schools, (of which there are more than eighty in the city,) in regular succession into this school, to familiarize them with whatever, upon experiment, shall be found to succeed well. Although it cannot be doubted, that this enterprise, under the judicious management of the committee, will prove very beneficial ; yet it is hardly rational to anticipate, that it will supersede the necessity of a Normal School for the city.

I cannot doubt, that the Board will hear, with lively gratification, other evidence of an increased interest in this subject. Considering how inadequate to the wants of the whole community, a county meeting—annual only—on the subject of Education, must necessarily be, several of the county conventions appointed large and most respectable committees to prepare and deliver, or cause to be prepared and delivered, a lecture in the different towns of the respective counties ;—or, where towns were large, then, in different

places in the same town. In pursuance of this excellent plan, such lectures have already been delivered, or lecturers are now engaged in delivering them, in the counties of Nantucket, Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester, and to some extent in Essex.

During the last summer, too, a few gentlemen in the city of Boston adopted measures to procure the delivery of a course of weekly lectures for the benefit of teachers in the city. This course commenced about the middle of October last, and still continues. Engaged, in country and city, in this voluntary and gratuitous labor, are gentlemen, who have been, or are, members of the State and National Legislatures, counsellors at law, physicians, clergymen of all denominations, experienced and long-approved teachers, and some of the most popular writers in the State. All these intelligent and forecasting men, who see, that future consequences can alone be regulated by attention to present causes, are profoundly convinced, that unless juvenile feelings, in this State and Country, are assiduously trained to an observance of law and a reverence for justice, it will be impossible to restrain adult passions from individual debasement and public commotion. The course of a stream, which a thousand men cannot obstruct, as it flows into the ocean, may be turned by a child at the fountain. Above, it will yield to the guidance of a hand ; below, its flood will sweep works and workmen away.

There are other indications, that public opinion on this subject is advancing in the right direction. More committees are inquiring into the qualifications of candidates for teaching, instead of taking such qualifications for granted. Persons, who had taught school a dozen winters have been set aside for incompetency in the elementary branches. The law, requiring committees to visit the schools, has been better observed, than ever before ; and teachers are realizing the benefit of such visitations, in the encouragement and stimulus they have supplied to the pupils. Many teachers are more justly appreciating the true elevation and responsibility of their vocation ; and are animated by those high motives, whose prerogative it is to convert toil into pleasure.

On the reverse side of this picture, however, it is my duty to present, that of the twenty-nine rich and populous towns, bound by law, to keep a school, at least ten months in each year, " for the

benefit of all the inhabitants of the town," and which were reported, last year, as violating this law, by non-compliance, only two, viz. Nantucket and Taunton, have since established the schools required. It will be recollected, that this class of towns takes precedence of almost all the others in wealth; that they expend a far less proportion of money, per scholar, for the support of public schools, than the poorer and more sparsely populated towns, while, at the same time, they expend a far greater proportion of money for private schools. At the rate of two in a year, it will take about fifteen years for all the towns in this class to comply with the law;—a length of probation, it is to be feared, which will tend to harden rather than reform the delinquents.

Sufficient time has not yet elapsed to allow the practical results of last winter's legislation to be developed. The law for the compensation of school committees was not enacted, until after the committees for the current year had been elected. The reasons, which, in former years, had deterred so many competent men from accepting that meritorious office, still existed. The ensuing annual elections will show, how far the public will consent, that any man, incompetent for, or heartless in, the performance of this responsible duty, shall be entrusted with it and receive its compensation. Nor has the time yet arrived, at which all school committees are to make to their respective towns a report, "designating particular improvements and defects in the methods or means of education, and stating such facts and suggestions in relation thereto, as in their opinion, will best promote the interests and increase the usefulness of the schools." Great good will unquestionably result from each of these provisions.

The "Register," prescribed by the law of last winter, "to be faithfully kept, in all the town and district schools in the Commonwealth," has been almost universally, (one or two places only, so far as I have learned, undertaking to absolve themselves from a compliance with the law,) introduced into the schools, with excellent effect. Skilful teachers find it a valuable auxiliary in securing greater regularity in the attendance of the scholars. By the Report of last year, it appeared, that "a portion of the children, dependent wholly upon the common schools, absented themselves from the

winter school, either permanently or occasionally, equal to a permanent absence of about one-third part of their whole number ; and a portion absented themselves from the summer schools, either permanently or occasionally, equal to a permanent absence of considerably more than two-fifths of their whole number." Thus after all the labor and expense of establishing, maintaining, and supervising the schools have been incurred ; after the schools have been brought to the very doors of the children ; the school itself is made to suffer in all its departments, by the inconstant attendance of the children, and the children suffer, in habits and character, from inconstant attendance upon the school. Whatever diminishes this evil, is cheaply bought, though at much cost. The keeping of a daily Register is also the only means, by which the committees can be enabled to make accurate, instead of conjectural, returns, for the Annual Abstracts. The "Register" and the "Annual Abstract" are so far parts of a whole, that both should be continued or both abolished. The Abstracts are prepared as statistics for legislative action and economical science. If true, they will evince philosophical principles to be the basis of wise measures. But if false, they lead to practical errors, with scientific certainty ; and they annul the chance which ignorance enjoys of being sometimes right by accident or mistake.

The Board are already aware that the "*Form*" of the Register, prepared this year, was sent out in single sheets, and for one year only, that its fitness might be tested ; and that "in order to establish a more perfect and permanent Register, all persons were invited to suggest improvements." In the circulars, sent to the school committees, this invitation was repeated. Verbally or in writing, I have received a variety of suggestions, for modifying its form. Some of these suggestions are diametrically opposite to each other, even where they come from towns lying side by side, and whose general circumstances, (except in the amount of attention, bestowed upon their schools,) are similar. The number of towns in the country, is precisely equal, which, on one side, declare it to be too complicated and particular ; and, on the other, suggest, as improvements, the addition of a number of new items. I mention these particulars, that the towns may know, how impossible is a conformity to views

so conflicting. As some teachers and school committees do not seem to be aware of the advantages of keeping so full a Register as has been proposed, perhaps it may be expedient to prepare a Form, embracing those facts only, of which a record should be kept, in every school ; and then, to leave it to those who more fully appreciate its uses, to keep such a supplementary Register as they may think best.

The report on Schoolhouses, made by me to the Board in March last, detailing, among other things, (see pp. 30, 31,) a plan for a union of school districts and a gradation of schools, in places where the compactness of the population would allow, was followed by the act of the Legislature of April 25th, authorizing a union of school districts for the important purposes specified. A few towns have already acted upon that plan, and the public mind is earnestly called to it by the friends of education in other places. Wherever it can be adopted, it will tend to diminish the evils and to increase the efficiency of our educational system.

But were all the territory of the State judiciously divided into districts ; were there a just gradation in the schools ; were every school-house good ; had every school the best teacher that could be found, and the guidance and encouragement of the most wise and assiduous school committee ;—still, all these would be only preliminary steps in the numerous and complicated processes of Education. The true medium in the government of schools, between austere demeanor and severity on the one hand, and, on the other, a facile temper, yielding to every pressure and just according to the pressure ;—the great questions of rewards and punishments, whose influence spreads out over such wide tracts of feeling and character in after-life ;—the selection of motives to enkindle the ardor of children in their studies, together with the precedence of these motives in regard to each other, that is, whether the minds of children should be forever turned outwards to the worldly advantages of wealth, office, rank, display, as incitements to duty ; or inwards, towards the perception of right and wrong in their own hearts, and to the noiseless, boundless rewards, which nature gives for conscientious conduct, in spite of the laws, or power, or hate of men ;—the one course, setting the applause of the world before rectitude, the other reversing their position :—and in regard to

processes, more intellectual in their character ;—such as the succession of studies best tending to cultivate the mental powers, in the order of their natural development ;—the question of a more or less rapid alternation from one study to another ;—the degrees in which either the instruction or government of a school should be modified so as to be adapted to peculiarities of individual character ;—all these, and many more points would remain to be settled before the outlines were filled up, of any thing worthy to be called a philosophical plan of Education. Surveying the subject, therefore, in the extent and diversity of its parts, the only practicable and useful course seemed to be, to select some particular topic, and, as far as possible, to collect facts, educe principles, and offer hints for practice. Science must grow out of observation ; art out of science.

From the earliest observations made on visiting schools, (and such as I have visited were, probably, above the average of schools in the State,) I have been impressed with the obvious want of intelligence, in the reading classes, respecting the subject-matter of the lessons. With some exceptions, I regret to say, that the eyes, features, and motions of the readers have indicated only bodily sensations, not mental activity ; while the volume of voice emitted has too closely resembled those mechanical contrivances for the transmission of fluids, which, with admirable precision, discharge equal quantities, in equal times. At the same time, I was sure, that, had the subject-matter of the reading lesson been understood, it would have opened a fountain of pleasurable emotions within, whose streams would have flowed out through every channel of expression. And on examination, I have often found, that the black and white page of the book was the outer boundary of the reader's thoughts, and a barrier to arrest their progress, instead of being a vehicle to carry them onward or upward, into whatever region the author might have expatiated. When the pupils were directed to the subject-matter of the reading lesson, to the orderly unfolding of its parts, as branches proceeding from a common trunk, I have found them committing mistakes which, though ludicrous, as facts, were most lamentable, as indications.

Deeming the mode, and the degree of success found to attend it, of teaching our children the orthography and significance of their mother tongue, to be the most important question which could be put in

regard to their intellectual culture, I determined to make those points the main objects of inquiry in my annual visit into the different counties. For distinctness' sake, I proposed, among others, the two following questions to the school committees of the several towns in the State.

1st. *"Are scholars in your schools kept in spelling classes from the time of their earliest combination of letters, up to the time of their leaving school; or what is the course ordinarily pursued, in regard to teaching orthography, and how long is it continued?"*

2nd. *"Are there defects in teaching scholars to read? This inquiry is not made in regard to the pronunciation of words and the modulation of the voice. But do the scholars fail to understand the meaning of the words they read? Do they fail to master the sense of the reading lessons? Is there a presence in the minds of the scholars, when reading, of the ideas and feelings intended to be conveyed and excited by the author?"*

In answer to another question, not here quoted, relative to the ages within which children attend our public schools, I have learnt, that *exclusive* regulations, founded on age, exist in but very few towns—probably in not more than fifteen or twenty,—in the State. And although the great majority of the children in the schools are between the ages of four and sixteen, yet in almost all the towns, they are allowed to attend both earlier and later, and they are found from three, and sometimes from two years of age, up to twenty-one years, very frequently, and sometimes to twenty-four or twenty-five. I learn, also, that, with scarcely a single exception in the whole State, the scholars are kept in spelling classes, or they spell daily from their reading lessons, from the time of their earliest combination of letters, up to the time of their leaving school; and yet, if testimony, derived from a thousand sources, and absolutely uniform, can be relied on, there is a Babel-like diversity in the spelling of our language.

It is impossible to ascertain with any considerable degree of precision the per centage of words in ordinary use, which the children are unable to spell; but it seems to be the general opinion of the most competent observers, that the schools have retrograded within the last generation or half generation, in regard to orthography. Nor is the condition of the schools better in regard to reading, as will hereafter be shown.

The evil of incorrect spelling and unintelligent reading is, by no means, wholly imputable to teachers. It springs, in part, from the use of books, ill-adapted to the different stages of growth in youthful minds. Another cause consists in a most pernicious error on the part of parents, in regard to the true objects of reading. Many teachers have assured me, that they are perfectly aware, that the time spent in reading is mainly lost ; but that the usages of the school and the demands of the district, prohibit them—perhaps under penalty of dismissal—from adopting a better mode. It is said, that the first and only inquiry, made by parents of their children is, “ how many times and how much have you read,” not “ what have you read about ?” A question like the last, presupposes some judgment and some ability to follow it up with further inquiries ; but any body can put the first, for it is an easy problem which solves the ratio of mental progress by the number of pages mechanically gone over. The children’s minds are not looked into, to see what new operations they can accurately perform ; but the inquiry relates only to the amount of labor, done by the organs of speech ;—as though so many turns of the bodily machine would yield, perforce, a corresponding amount of mental product. It is characteristic of the learned professions, that the person employed directs the employer ; and it is earnestly to be hoped, that teachers will soon deservedly win so much of the confidence of the community, that they will no longer feel constrained to practise methods, they know to be valueless, in order to harmonize with opinions, they know to be pernicious.

It is probable, also, that this mischief may have been aggravated, in those places where there is a gradation of schools, by the conditions, prescribed in their regulations, for advancing from one school to another. One important fact, I have learned, is, that in places containing in the aggregate not less than one hundred thousand inhabitants, (about one-seventh of the population of the State,) a condition for rising from one school to another is, either in express words or in substance, that the candidate shall be able to “ read fluently.” Under such a rule, should a strong desire exist to advance children to a higher school, there is great danger that the value of *intelligent* reading will be sacrificed to the worthlessness of mere “ *fluent*” reading.

In this State, where the schools are open to all, an inability to spell

the commonly used words in our language, justly stamps the deficient mind with the stigma of illiteracy. Notwithstanding the intrinsic difficulty of mastering our orthography, there must be some defect in the manner of teaching it ;—otherwise, this daily attention of the children to the subject, from the commencement to the end of their school-going life, would make them adepts in the mystery of spelling, except in cases of mental incapacity. Anomalous, arbitrary, contradictory, as is the formation of the words of our language from its letters, yet it is the blessing of the children, that they know not what they undertake, when they begin the labor.

But, however deeply we may be mortified at the general inability of our youth to spell well, it is the lightest of all regrets, compared with the calamity of their pretending to read, what they fail to understand. Language is not merely a necessary instrument of civilization, past or prospective, but it is an indispensable condition of our existence as rational beings. We are accustomed to speak with admiration of those assemblages of things, we call the necessities, the comforts, the blessings of life, without thinking that language is a pre-necessary to them all. It requires a union of two things, entirely distinct in themselves, to confer the highest attribute of human greatness ;—in the first place, a creative mind, revolving, searching, reforming, perfecting, within its own silent recesses ; and then such power over the energy and copiousness of language, as can bring into light whatever was prepared in darkness and can transfer it to the present or the absent, to contemporaries or posterity. Thucydides makes Pericles say, that, “one who forms a judgment upon any point, but cannot explain himself clearly to the people, might as well have never thought at all on the subject.” The highest strength of understanding and justness of feeling, without fitting language to make themselves manifest, are but as the miser’s hoard ; without even the reversion of benefit, we may ultimately expect from the latter. And for all social purposes, thought and expression are dependent, each upon the other. Ideas without words are valueless to the public ; and words without ideas have this mischievous attribute, that they inflict the severest pains and penalties on those who are most innocent of thus abusing them.

This is not a place to speak of the nature and utility of language,

any further than is rigidly necessary to an exposition of the best mode of acquiring and the true object in using it. Within this limit, it may be observed, that we arrive at knowledge in two ways ; first, by our own observation of phenomena without, and our own consciousness of what passes within us ; and we seek words aptly to designate whatever has been observed, whether material or mental. In this case the objects and events are known to us, before the names, or phrases, which describe them ; or, secondly, we see or hear words, and through a knowledge of their diversified applications, we become acquainted with objects and phenomena, of which we should otherwise have remained forever ignorant. In this case, the words precede a knowledge of the things they designate. In one case we are introduced to words through things ; in the other, to things, through words ; but when once both have been strongly associated together, the presence of either will suggest its correlative. The limited fund of knowledge laid open to us by the former mode bears no assignable proportion to the immense resources proffered us by the latter. Without language, we should know something of the more obtrusive phenomena, within reach of the senses, but an impenetrable wall of darkness would lie beyond their narrow horizon. With language, that horizon recedes until the expanse of the globe, with its continents, its air, its oceans, and all that are therein, lies under our eye, like an adjacent landscape. Without language, our own memory dates the beginning of time, and the record of our own momentary existence contains all that we can know of universal history. But with language, antiquity re-lives ; we are spectators at the world's creation ; we are present with our first progenitors, when the glory of a new life beamed from their inanimate frames ; the long train of historic events passes in review before us ; we behold the multiplication and expansion of our race, from individuals to nations, from patriarchs to dynasties ; we see their temporal vicissitudes and moral transformations ; the billowy rise and fall of empires ; the subsidence of races, whose power and numbers once overshadowed the earth ; the emergence of feeble and despised tribes into wide extended dominion ; we see the dealings of God with men, and of men with each other ;—all, in fine, which has been done and suffered by our kindred nature, in arms, arts, science, phi-

losophy, judicature, government ; and we see them, not by their own light only, but by the clearer light reflected upon them from subsequent times. What contrast could be more striking, than that between an unlettered savage and a philosopher,—the one imprisoned, the other privileged,—in the halls of the same library ;—the one compelled by fear to gaze upon the pages of a book, the other impatient for the pleasure of doing it ! As the former works his reluctant eye downwards over successive lines, he sees nothing but ink and paper. Beyond, it is vacancy. But to the eye of the philosopher, the sombre pages are magically illuminated. By their light he sees other lands and times. All that filled his senses before he opened the revealing page is only an atom of the world, in which he now expatiates. He is made free of the universe. A sentiment, uttered thousands of years ago, if touched by the spirit of humanity, falls freshly upon his responsive bosom. The fathers of the world come out of the past and stand around him and hold converse with him, as it were, face to face. Old eloquence and poetry are again heard and sung. Sages imbue him with their wisdom ; martyrs inspire him by their example ; and the authors of discoveries, each one of whom won immortality by the boon he conferred upon the race, become his teachers. Truths, which it took ages to perfect and establish ; sciences elaborated by the world's intellect, are passed over to him, finished and whole. This presents but the faintest contrast, between the savage and the philosopher, looking at the same books, and, to a superficial observer, occupied alike.

To prepare children for resembling the philosopher, rather than the savage, it is well to begin early, but it is far more important to begin right ; and the school is the place for children to form an invincible habit of never using the organs of speech, by themselves, and as an apparatus, detached from, and independent of, the mind. The school is the place to form a habit of observing distinctions between words and phrases, and of adjusting the language used to various extents of meaning. It is the place, where they are to commence the great art of adapting words to ideas and feelings, just as we apply a measuring instrument to objects to be measured. Then, in after life, they will never venture upon the use of words which they do not understand ; and they will be enabled to use lan-

guage, co-extensive with their thoughts and feelings,—language which shall mark off so much of any subject as they wish to exhibit, as plainly as though they could have walked round it and set up landmarks.

There is time enough devoted to exercises on language in our schools, to have enabled every one of that numerous class of citizens, whose attainments and good sense entitle them to be elected to municipal offices or to some station in the government, to prepare written documents, to draft petitions, reports and so forth, upon all ordinary subjects, not professional or technical. Yet how many men of excellent judgment find themselves unable to express their thoughts clearly and forcibly, in speech or writing, because they have never been accustomed to apply language to mental operations. Every man, conversant with the profession of the law, knows, that no inconsiderable portion of those litigated cases, which burden courts and embroil neighborhoods, arises from some misapprehension of the meaning of the language, used by the parties, in oral or written contracts. The time, spent by the scholars in reading, from the age of eight or ten to sixteen years, is amply sufficient to enrich their minds with a great amount of various and useful knowledge, without encroaching one hour upon other accustomed studies.

There is another fact, most pertinent to this part of the subject. It is well known that science itself, among scientific men, can never advance far beyond a scientific language in which to record its laws and principles. An unscientific language, like the Chinese, will keep a people unscientific forever. So the knowledge of a people on any subject, cannot far exceed the compass of the language, which they fully comprehend. If what are called the exact sciences do not depend upon the exactness of the language they use, all exactness in other sciences does. Nor is it a fact of less importance, that language reacts upon the mind that uses it. It is like the garments, in which some nations clothe themselves, which shape the very limbs, that draw them on. Men are generally very willing to modify or change their opinions and views, while they exist in thought merely, but when once formally expressed, the language chosen often becomes the mould of the opinion. The opinion fills the mould but cannot break it and assume a new form. Thus errors of thought and of life, originate in impotence of language.

The English language has been estimated to contain seventy or eighty thousand words in reputable use. A knowledge of so many of these words as are in common use, with a power of summoning them, like trained bands, to come at the bidding of thought, arises from the smallest beginnings. The distance is so immense, between the first, rude articulation of an infant, and the splendid and law-giving utterance of an eloquent man, that we could hardly believe, beforehand, that the two extremes had reference to the same individual. To gain time, by shortening the distance between these extremes, or by removing obstacles and thus accelerating progress from the former to the latter, is one of the most appropriate labors of education. The hints which follow are offered with diffidence ;—in the hope, however, that they may prove useful themselves, or be suggestive to other minds of that which is better.

The process of learning to spell our language is so imperceptibly lost in that of learning to read it, that the two can best be considered together.

One preliminary truth is to be kept steadily in view in all the processes of teaching, and in the preparation of all its instruments ; viz. that, though much may be done by others to aid, yet the effective labor must be performed by the learner himself. Knowledge cannot be poured into a child's mind, like fluid from one vessel into another. The pupil may do something by intuition, but generally there must be a conscious effort on his part. He is not a passive recipient, but an active, voluntary agent. He must do more than admit or welcome ; he must reach out, and grasp, and bring home. It is the duty of the teacher to bring knowledge within arm's length of the learner ; and he must break down its masses into portions so minute, that they can be taken up and appropriated, one by one ; but the final appropriating act must be the learner's. Knowledge is not annexed to the mind like a foreign substance, but the mind assimilates it by its own vital powers. It is far less true, that each one must earn his own bread by the sweat of his own brow, than it is that each one must earn his own knowledge by the labor of his own brain ; for, strictly speaking, nature recognises no title to it by inheritance, gift or finding. Development of mind is by growth and organization, not by external accretion. Hence all effective teaching must have reference

to this indispensable, consummating act and effort of the learner. The feelings may undoubtedly be modified by external impressions, and, therefore, the mind is sometimes spoken of as passive, recipient, adoptive ; and the objects around us have a fitness and adaptation to awaken mental activity ; but the acquisition of positive knowledge is not effected by a process of involuntary absorption. Such a notion belongs to the philosophy by which, a few years ago, a grammatical chart was published and pretty extensively sold in some of the States, whose peculiar virtue it was, that, if hung up somewhere in a house, the whole family would shortly become good grammarians, by mysteriously imbibing, as it were, certain grammatical effluvia. The distinction should become broader and broader, between the theory of education which deals with mind as living spirit, and that which deals with it as a lifeless substance. Every scholar, in a school, must think with his own mind, as every singer, in a choir, must sing with his own voice.

If then, in learning, all wills and desires, all costs, labors, efforts, of others, are dependant, at last, upon the will of the learner, the first requisite is the existence in his mind of a desire to learn. Children, who spend six months in learning the alphabet, will, on the playground, in a single half day or moonlight evening, learn the intricacies of a game or sport,—where to stand, when to run, what to say, how to count, and what are the laws and the ethics of the game ;—the whole requiring more intellectual effort than would suffice to learn half a dozen alphabets. So of the recitation of verses, mingled with action, and of juvenile games, played in the chimney corner. And the reason is, that for the one, there is desire ; while against the other, there is repugnance. The teacher, in one case, is rolling a weight up hill, in the other, down ; for gravitation is not more to the motions of a heavy body, than desire is to the efficiency of the intellect. Until a desire to learn exists within the child, some foreign force must constantly be supplied to keep him agoing ; but from the moment that a desire is excited, he is self-motive, and goes alone.

Perhaps the best way of inspiring a young child with a desire of learning to read is, to read to him, with proper intervals, some interesting story, perfectly intelligible, yet as full of suggestion as of communication ; for the pleasure of discovering is always greater than

that of perceiving. Care should be taken, however, to leave off, before the ardor of curiosity cools. He should go away longing, not loathing. After the appetite has become keen,—and nature supplies the zest,—the child can be made to understand how he can procure this enjoyment for himself. The motive of affection also may properly be appealed to, that is, a request to learn in order to please the teacher ; but this should never be pressed so far as to jeopard its existence, for it is a feeling more precious than all knowledge. The process of learning words and letters is toilsome, and progress will be slow, unless a motive is inspired before instruction is attempted ; and if three months are allowed to teach a child his letters, there is greater probability, that the work will be done at the end of the time, even though ten weeks of it should be spent in gaining his voluntary co-operation, during the residue of the time. A desire of learning is better than all external opportunities, because it will find or make opportunities, and then improve them.

Such are the difficulties in acquiring the orthography of our language, that it is said we have but two or three classes of uniformly correct spellers. Almost all, except publishers or printers and proof-readers, are more or less deficient in this acquisition. While some other languages, as the Italian, French and German, assign to individual letters a power, which is scarcely varied whenever they recur ; the power given to the letters, in the English alphabet, bears little resemblance to their power, when combined in words. In a vast number of words, there is a uniformity of pronunciation with diversity in spelling, or a diversity in pronunciation with similar spelling. The same letter has many different sounds, while different letters have the same sound, so that the learner, after learning the sound of a letter in one place, has no assurance of being right in giving it the same sound in another. The letters seem to change work with each other. Added to this, many words have silent letters, and in words, otherwise of a formation exactly similar, some have silent letters, others none. Were it not for our familiarity with it, no fact would be more striking, than that which always presents itself to the eye, upon opening an English dictionary ; viz. the double column of words for the same language,—one for a guide in spelling, the other, in pronunciation. But it is no part of this report to analyse our lan-

guage and expose its unscientific structure and anomalous composition. It is either very much too late or too early to reform its arbitrary constitution. To adapt the pronunciation to the orthography would be to make a new spoken language ;—to adapt its orthography to its pronunciation would be to make a new written one.

When a motive to learn exists, the first practical question respects the order in which letters and words are to be taught ; i. e. whether letters, taken separately, as in the alphabet, shall be taught before words, or whether monosyllabic and familiar words shall be taught before letters. In those who learnt, and have since taught, in the former mode, and have never heard of any other, this suggestion may excite surprise. The mode of teaching words first, however, is not mere theory ; nor is it new. It has now been practised for some time in the primary schools of the city of Boston, —in which there are four or five thousand children,—and it is found to succeed better than the old mode. In other places in this country, and in some parts of Europe, where education is successfully conducted, the practice of teaching words first, and letters subsequently, is now established. Having no personal experience, I shall venture no affirmation upon this point ; but will only submit a few remarks for the consideration of those, who wish, before countenancing the plan, to examine the reasons on which it is founded.

During the first year of a child's life, he perceives, thinks, and acquires something of a store of ideas, without any reference to words or letters. After this, the wonderful faculty of language begins to develop itself. Children then utter words,—the names of objects around them,—as whole sounds, and without any conception of the letters of which those words are composed. In speaking the word "apple," for instance, young children think no more of the Roman letters, which spell it, than, in eating the fruit, they think of the chemical ingredients,—the oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon,—which compose it. Hence, presenting them with the alphabet, is giving them what they never saw, heard, or thought of before. It is as new as algebra, and to the eye, not very unlike it. But printed names of known things are the signs of sounds which their ears have been accustomed to hear, and their organs of speech to utter, and which may excite agreeable feelings and associations, by reminding them of the objects named. When put

to learning the letters of the alphabet first, the child has no acquaintance with them, either by the eye, the ear, the tongue, or the mind; but if put to learning familiar words first, he already knows them by the ear, the tongue, and the mind, while his eye only is unacquainted with them. He is thus introduced to a stranger, through the medium of old acquaintances. It can hardly be doubted, therefore, that a child would learn to name any twenty-six familiar words, much sooner than the twenty-six unknown, unheard and unthought of letters of the alphabet.

For another reason, the rapidity of acquisition will be greater, if words are taught before letters. To learn the words signifying objects, qualities, actions, with which the child is familiar, turns his attention to those objects, if present, or revives the idea of them, if absent, and thus they may be made the source of great interest and pleasure. We all know, that the ease with which any thing is learned and the length of time it is remembered, are in the direct ratio of the vividness of the pleasurable emotions, which enliven the acquisition.

But there is another consideration far more forcible than the preceding. The general practice is founded upon the notion that the learning of letters facilitates the correct combination of them into words. Hence children are drilled on the alphabet, until they pronounce the name of each letter at sight. And yet, when we combine letters into words, we forthwith discard the sounds, which belonged to them as letters. The child is taught to sound the letter *a*, until he becomes so familiar with it, that the sound is uttered as soon as the character is seen. But the first time, this letter is found, even in the most familiar words,—as in *father, papa, mama, apple, peach, walnut, hat, cap, bat, rat, slap, pan, &c. &c.*—it no longer has the sound he was before taught to give it, but one entirely different. And so of the other vowels. In words, they all seem in masquerade. Where is the alphabetic sound of *o* in the words, *word, dove, plough, enough, other*, and in innumerable others. Any person may verify this by taking any succession of words, at random, in any English book. The consequence is, that whenever the child meets his old friends in new company, like rogues, they have all changed their names. Thus the knowledge of the sounds of letters

in the alphabet becomes an obstacle, to the right pronunciation of words ; and the more perfect the knowledge, the greater the obstacle. The reward of the child, for having thoroughly mastered his letters, is to have his knowledge of them cut up in detail, by a regular series of contradictions, just as fast as he brings it forward. How different, for instance, is the sound of the word *is*, from the two alphabetic sounds, *i* and *s* ;—of the word *we*, from the two sounds, *w* and *e* ;—of the word, *two*, from the three sounds, *t*, *w*, and *o*. We teach an honest child to sound the letters, *e*, *y*, *e*, singly, until he utters them at sight, and then, with a grave face, we ask him what *e*, *y*, *e*, spells ; and if he does not give the long sound of *i*, he is lucky, if he escapes a rebuke or a frown. Nothing can more clearly prove the delightful confidence and trustfulness of a child's nature, than his not boldly charging us, under such circumstances, with imposition and fraud.

There is a fact, however, which may, perhaps, in part, cancel the differences, here pointed out. The alphabet must be learned, at some time, because there are various occasions, besides those of consulting dictionaries or cyclopædias, where the regular sequence of the letters must be known ; and possibly it may be thought, that it will be as difficult to learn the letters, after learning the words, as before. But the fact, which deprives this consideration of some part at least of its validity, is, that it always greatly facilitates an acquisition of the names of objects, or persons, to have been conversant with their forms and appearances beforehand. The learning of words is an introduction to an acquaintance with the letters, composing them.

To obviate the inconsistency of teaching children the names of letters, which are to be untaught as soon as they are combined into words, some persons instruct them in the vocal elements of the letters only ;—that is, to utter, for each letter, that part of the sound of a whole word, which belongs to the letters, respectively,—as to give a single breathing for the letter *h*, instead of the sound of *aytch*. This practice is very limited.

The next step in the acquisition of our language is the spelling of its words. The arbitrary and capricious formation of words from letters, is, undoubtedly, one great cause, that with all our attention to the subject, we have so few good spellers.

One fact has been often remarked, that if children do not learn to spell pretty correctly, before the age of ten or twelve years, they rarely become good spellers afterwards. This fact supplies us with a useful hint, in regard to making other studies give place, a little, to this, before the favorable season is passed. Another consideration, derived from the order in which the intellectual powers are developed, strongly corroborates the same position. Language is an early developed intellectual power ;—reason is one of the latest. The spelling of a tongue, so anomalous as ours, depends upon a verbal memory. It is not a subject to be reasoned about. The more one relies upon his reason to determine the true spelling of English words, the oftener he will mistake. The discovery and correct application of principles and analogies would generally exclude correctness. I presume it has happened to many persons, when writing, that if they could write one of the less common words, without thinking how it should be spelt, they would write it correctly ; but if, by any chance, the inquiry how it should be spelt, arose in their minds, they would immediately be involved in doubts, which no reasoning could solve, and be obliged to turn to a dictionary. These facts indicate also, that spelling should be pursued at an age, when more is learned by perception and imitation, than by reflection.

But one thing should be insisted upon, *from* the beginning, and especially *at* the beginning. No word should be taught, whose meaning is not understood. The teacher should not count out words, faster than ideas. The foundation of the habit should be laid, in the reading of the very first lesson, of regarding words as the names of things ; as belonging to something else, and as nothing by themselves. They should be looked at, as a medium, and not as an end. It is as senseless for a child to stop at the sign of the printed word, in reading, as it would be to stop at the sound of the spoken word, in conversation. What child would not repel the intercourse of a person, who spoke to him only words, of which he knew nothing ? No personal charms would be long sufficient to compensate for speaking to a child, in an unknown tongue. How is it possible then, that an active-minded child should not disdain the dreary pages of a book, which awaken no thought or emotion within him ;—which are neither beauty to the eye, nor music to the ear,

nor sense to the understanding ? As reading is usually taught, the child does not come into communication with his lesson, by any one of all his faculties. When a child looks into a mirror, or at a picture where the perspective is strikingly marked, he will reach around to look behind the mirror, or behind the picture, in hope of finding the objects in the place where they appear to be. He cares nothing for the mirror, nor for the canvass ;—his mind is with the things presented to his senses. In reading, the page should be only as the mirror or picture, through which objects are beheld. Thus there would be far more delight in looking at the former, than at the latter ; because words can present more circumstances of variety, beauty, life, amplitude, than any reflecting surface or dead picture. Should we not revolt at the tyranny of being obliged to pore, day after day, upon the outer darkness of a Chinese manuscript ? But if the words are not understood, the more regular formation of the Chinese characters gives them a decided advantage over our own letters. Give a child two glasses, precisely similar in every respect, except that one shall be opaque, the other a magnifier. Through the former nothing can be seen, and it therefore degenerates into a bauble ; but the latter seems to create a thousand new and brilliant objects, and hence he is enamored of its quality. There is precisely the same difference in the presentation of words. Yet we punish children, because they do not master words, without any regard to their being understood.

But how can this plan be executed ? In this way. During the first year of a child's life, before the faculty of speech is developed, —before he has ever uttered a word,—he has obtained a considerable stock of ideas, respecting objects, qualities and motions. During the next year or two and before it is usual to teach letters, he is employed through every waking hour, both in learning the words, expressive of known phenomena and also in acquiring a knowledge of new things and events ; so that before the age of four or even three years, the items of his inventory of elementary knowledge swell to thousands. In his memory, are not merely playthings, but catalogues of furniture, food, dress, insects, animals, vehicles, objects in natural scenery, divisions of time, and so forth, with various motions and appearances, belonging to them all. Numbers, sounds, events, feel-

ings, also come into the list. This is a stock not readily exhausted. By first teaching the names or phrases expressive of these, the substance is always present to his mind, and the words are mere signs or incidents ; and a habit is formed of always keeping the mind, in after-life, intent upon things and their relations,—a habit of inestimable value and the only foundation of intellectual greatness.

I am not unaware of what is said by Locke, Burke and others, of our using words and phrases, without at all summoning into the mind, the particular ideas, signified. This is undoubtedly true, to some extent, but it belongs to a later period in life. It is only after having used words, times almost innumerable, with an accompanying conception of the things signified, that we, at last, transfer to the words, a general conception of what originally belonged to the ideas. If comparisons may be allowed to illustrate a point somewhat obscure, the words have been so long used as a vehicle of the things, that, at last, when we see the vehicle, we presume the contents ;—or, as in the case of those persons, who are accustomed to count large masses of specie, over and over again, in branded boxes or labelled bags ; having opened them many times and found them to contain the quantity stamped, they afterwards count by the mark. So it is with words in relation to ideas. But, if the ideas have never been compared with the words ; that is, if the specie has never been counted and compared with the stamp, then, the latter has no signification. Hence the comparisons are the very first steps in the operation, and it is only by virtue of having made them, that we can afterwards venture to facilitate the operation, by relying upon the index. And an early habit of associating every word with an idea, is rendered so much the more necessary, because words are only arbitrary and artificial signs of thoughts and feelings. Were they natural signs, then the whole stress of observation and experience through life would serve to connect and bind together, more and more closely, the signs and the things signified. There would be a perpetual and strong tendency to coalescence between them. But as the relation is wholly conventional, if the habit is not formed of uniting the sound to the sense, an opposite habit of separating them is necessarily established. For an obvious reason, therefore, a correct habit is more easily formed at the commencement than ever afterwards.

Were this process observed, it would reduce almost to nothing two classes of men amongst us ; one of whom are greatly impaired in their usefulness, because, though they think much, they can never speak ; the other absolutely noxious, because, though speaking much, they never think. The latter class, indeed, seem to be retaliating upon that early period of their life, when they thought without speaking, by speaking without thinking, during the residue

When it is said, however, that a child should not be put to reading what he cannot understand, it is to be taken with that reasonable qualification, which springs from the nature of the case, and which every candid mind will supply. There are certain words in everyday use, of whose comprehension all finite intellect must fall almost infinitely short. Such are the words immensity, infinity, absolute perfection, and so forth. These are used, as mathematicians use algebraic signs, to express unknown quantities. There are other words also, of whose meaning, no man has any thing more than a proximate apprehension. But a child of three years may perfectly understand what is meant, if he reads the word *newspaper*, and he may know many things respecting it, such as *title, outside, inside, columns, margin, top, bottom, size, length, breadth &c.*—and these constitute a palpable idea of a newspaper,—without knowing, that it is a microcosm, and that, for its production, there may have been required an effort of all the human faculties, working on the three kingdoms, mineral, vegetable and animal. So a child may have a clear conception of the meaning of such words, as *home, parent, affection, guilt, conscience*, without penetrating one line's length into their unfathomable depth of meaning. What is insisted upon is, that the child should have a clear conception of what is meant, that such conception should be correct, as far as it goes, and that it should be as extensive as his ability will allow.

Were a child skilfully taught, with only a due alternation between physical and mental exercise, and with an inspection of as many of the objects of nature and art, as common opportunity would allow, it is believed, that he might acquire a knowledge of the spelling and of the *primary* meanings of substantially all the unscientific and untechnical words, in ordinary use, before passing the age, when orthography becomes more difficult of attainment. If, however, owing to

early neglect in education, or to mental inefficiency, the most favorable season for learning to spell is passing away, and it is deemed advisable to hasten this acquisition at the expense of other studies, or, (if any one so prefers,) even of the meaning of words ; then it is believed, that the words may be so classified in the spelling-book, as greatly to facilitate the labor. For this purpose, let words be arranged together, whose difficult syllables agree in formation ; as, for instance, *syllable*, *sycophant*, *sylvan*, *symbol*, *synagogue*, *syntax*, in which *y* has the sound of *i*, short ; or in words, where *ch* has the sound of *k*, as in *machination*, *chronological*, *bacchanalian* ; or in words, where *qu* has the sound of *k*, as in *mosque*, *opaque*, *liquor* ; or where *ei* has the sound of *a*, as in *eight*, *weight*, *inveigh*, &c. This list might be almost indefinitely extended ; the above are given as specimens merely. The great advantage of this system is, that when the true formation of the difficult syllable is known for one word, it is known for the whole table, and frequent repetitions of the table will fix the order of the letters in the memory, which by the law of association, will afterwards involuntarily recur, like products in the multiplication table, or successive notes in a well-learned piece of music. Habit, founded on this association, will command the successive letters in writing, as unconsciously, as it does successive steps in walking. An excellent spelling-book has lately been published in this city, in which words are arranged with reference to their intelligibleness to children ; and Webster and Fowle have made close approximation, certainly, to arrangements of words, in conformity with the law of mental association, above referred to. It is believed that a spelling-book may be prepared which shall combine the first, greatest, and most indispensable of all requisites, that of addressing the innate and universal love of learning new things,—with such a philosophical adaptation to the successive periods of mental development, as shall, as a general rule, present what is to be learned, during the epoch, in which it can be most easily, and pleausurably acquired.

Would my limits permit, I should be glad to enter into some detail with regard to the modes, now practised in our schools, of teaching orthography. I will, however, only observe, that spelling, by writing, (when the pupil can write,) appears to have great advantages over spelling orally. In the business of life, we have no occa-

sion to spell orally, and thousands of cases have made it certain, that the same person may be a good speller with the lips, who is an indifferent one with the pen. Nor is this any more strange, than that a man should not be able to do dexterously with his left hand, what he has always been accustomed to do with his right.

It is obvious, that even in regard to orthography, the book-maker is the great auxiliary of the teacher. It is not less emphatically true of reading, that the book-maker and the teacher are performing different parts of one work. In this division of labor, the book-maker's part is first to be performed, and it is impossible for the best teacher wholly to make amends for what is untoward or preposterous on the author's part ; because clumsy and defective implements will baffle the ingenuity of the most perfect workman. While measures are in progress, therefore, to increase the competency of teachers, through the medium of Normal Schools ; the principles on which school books should be prepared, should receive careful attention, that good agents may have good instruments. I avail myself of this occasion to make a few suggestions upon the subject of reading books.

Reading is divisible into two parts. It consists of the *mechanical*, and the *mental*. The mechanical part is the utterance of the articulate sounds of a language, on inspecting its written or printed signs. It is called mechanical, because the operation closely resembles that of a machine, which may receive the best of materials and run through a thousand parcels of them every year ;—the machine itself remaining just as bare and naked at the end of the year, as it was at the beginning. On the other hand, one portion of the mental part of reading consists in a reproduction in the mind of the reader of whatever was in the mind of the author ; so that whether the author describes atoms or worlds, narrates the history of individuals or nations, kindles into sublimity, or melts in pathos,—whatever was in the author's mind starts into sudden existence in the reader's mind, as nearly as their different mental constitutions will allow. An example of the purely mechanical part is exhibited in reading a foreign language, no word of which is understood ; as in the case of Milton's daughters, who read the dead languages to their blind father ;—they, with eyes, seeing nothing but black marks upon white paper,—he, without eyes, surveying material and spiritual worlds,—at once charmed by their beauties, and instructed by their wisdom.

With the mental part, then, reading becomes the noblest instrument of wisdom ; without it, it is the most despicable part of folly and worthlessness. Beforehand, it would seem quite as incredible, that any person should compel children to go through with the barren forms of reading, without ideas ; as to make them perform all the motions of eating, without food. The body would not dwindle under the latter, more certainly, than the mind, under the former. The inevitable consequences are, that all the delight of acquisition is foregone ; the reward which nature bestows upon the activity of the faculties is forfeited,—a reward which is richer than all prizes and more efficient than all chastisement ;—and an inveterate habit is formed of dissociating thought and language. “ Understandest thou what thou readest,” therefore, is a question quite as apposite when put by a teacher to a child in his horn book, as when asked by an Apostle of the ambassador of a Queen.

Entertaining views of the importance of this subject, of which the above is only the feeblest expression, I have devoted especial pains to learn, with some degree of numerical accuracy, how far the reading, in our schools, is an exercise of the mind in thinking and feeling, and how far it is a barren action of the organs of speech upon the atmosphere. My information is derived, principally, from the written statements of the school committees of the respective towns,—gentlemen, who are certainly exempt from all temptation to disparage the schools, they superintend. The result is, that more than eleven-twelfths of all the children in the reading classes, in our schools, do not understand the meaning of the words they read ; that they do not master the sense of the reading lessons, and that the ideas and feelings intended by the author to be conveyed to, and excited in, the reader’s mind, still rest in the author’s intention, never having yet reached the place of their destination. And by this, it is not meant, that the scholars do not obtain such a full comprehension of the subject of the reading lessons, in its various relations and bearings, as a scientific or erudite reader would do, but that they do not acquire a reasonable and practicable understanding of them. It would hardly seem that the combined efforts of all persons, engaged, could have accomplished more, in defeating the true objects of reading.

How the cause of this deficiency is to be apportioned among the

legal supervisors of the schools, parents, teachers or authors of school books, it is impossible to say ; but surely it is an evil, gratuitous, widely prevalent and threatening the most alarming consequences. But it is not a remediless one. There is intelligence enough, in this community, to search out the cause, and wisdom enough to find and apply a remedy.

It has been already stated, that we may acquire a knowledge of a very few things,—such as are placed within the range of our senses,—without the use of language ; but that language is the only medium, by which any thing, prior to our own memory and experience, or beyond our own vision, can be made known to us. Although, therefore, the words which our language is said to contain, seem to be many ; yet when we think of all the relations of human life,—domestic, business, and social ;—of the countless objects in the different kingdoms of nature, with their connexions and dependencies ;—of the sciences, which have been founded upon them, and of the arts, to which they have been made subservient ;—of all, in fine, external to ourselves, within the circle of time and beneath the arch of heaven ; and of our own conscious hopes, fears, desires, to which that arch is no boundary ; we shall see, at once, that the words of our language, numerous as they are, are only as one to infinity, compared with the number of the objects to which they are daily applied. And yet these words are sufficient not only to present us with an image and a record of past and present existences, but they are capable of outrunning the course of time, and describing the possibilities of the future, and of transcending the limits of reality and portraying the fancy-peopled worlds, created by the imagination. And, what is still more wonderful, is, that with the aid of these comparatively few words, we can designate and touch, as it were with the finger, any one fact or event in this universe of facts and events, or parcel out any groups of them, from tens to tens of myriads ; or we can note any period on the dial-plate of by-gone centuries, just as easily as we refer to the hours of the passing day. Now to accomplish this, it is obvious, that language must be susceptible of combinations indefinitely numerous ; that most of its single words must assume different meanings, in different collocations, and that phrases, capable of expressing any one, or any millions of these facts, vicissitudes, relations, must be absolutely

inexhaustible. Then, again, language has various, strongly marked forms, as colloquial, philosophical, poetical, devotional ; and in each of these divisions, whatever subject we wish to separate from the rest, language can carve it out and display it distinctly and by itself, for our examination. It handles the most abstruse relations and affinities, and traces the most subtle analogies to their vanishing point ; or, with equal ease, it condenses the most universal principles into brief sentences, or, if we please, into single words. Hence, in using it, to express any greater or smaller part of what is perceived by the senses, by intellect, or by genius, the two conditions are, that we must discern, mentally, what individual object or quality, or what combinations of objects and qualities, we wish to specify ; and then we must select the words and form the phrases,—or volumes, if need be,—which will depict or designate by name, the individual objects we mean, or will draw a line round the combination of objects we wish to exhibit and describe. All true use of language, therefore, necessarily involves a mental act of adjustment, measure, precision, pertinency ; otherwise it cannot fix the extent or gauge the depth of any subject. Language is to be selected and applied to the subject-matter, whether that subject-matter be business, history, art or consciousness, just as a surveyor applies his chain to the measurement of areas, or as an artist selects his colors to portray the original. But what must be the result, if the surveyor knows nothing of the length of the chain he uses, and if the artist selects his colors by chance, and knows not to what parts he applies them ?

Hence, the acquisition of language consists far less in mastering words as individuals, than it does in adjusting their applications to things, in sentences and phrases. And one great object—there are others not less important—of teaching the children in our schools to read, is, that they may there commence this habit of adjustment, of specifying and delineating with precision, whatever is within the range of their knowledge and experience. All attempts, therefore, to teach language to children, are vain, which have not this constant reference to the subject-matter, intended to be specified and described. If the thing signified is not present to the mind, it is impossible, that the language should be a measure, for, by the supposition, there is nothing to be measured. It becomes a mere hollow sound ; and with

this disadvantage, that, from the parade, which is made in administering the nothingness, the child is led to believe he has received something. The uselessness of such a process would seem to be enough, without the falsity. The fact, that many children may not be able to make great progress in this adjustment of words to things, so far from being any reply to this view of the subject, only renders it so much the more important, that what is done should be done rightly.

Notwithstanding the immense treasures of knowledge, accumulated, in the past six thousand years, and the immense difference between the learned men of our own, and of ancient times ; yet no one denies that children are now brought into the world in the same state of ignorance, as they were before the flood. When born, only a single instinct is developed,—that of appetite for food. Weeks pass, before the quickest of all the senses—the sight—takes note of any object. At about the age of a year, the faculty of language dimly appears. One after another, other powers bud forth ; but it seems to be the opinion of the best metaphysicians, that the highest faculties of the intellect—those which, in their full development and energy, make the lawgivers of the race, and the founders of moral dynasties—hardly dawn before the age of twelve or fourteen years. And yet, in many of the reading books, now in use, in the schools, the most pithy sayings of learned men ; the aphorisms in which moralists have deposited a life of observation and experience ; the maxims of philosophers, embodying the highest forms of intellectual truth, are set down as First Lessons for children ;—as though, because a child was born after Bacon and Franklin, he could understand them of course. While a child is still engrossed with visible and palpable objects, while his juvenile playthings are yet a mystery to him, he is presented with some abstraction or generalization, just discovered, after the profoundest study of men and things, by some master intellect. But it matters not to children, how much knowledge or wisdom there may be in the world, on subjects foreign to themselves, until they have acquired strength of mind sufficient to receive and appropriate them. The only interest which a child has, in the attainments of the age, in which he is born, is, that they may be kept from him, until he has been prepared to receive them. Erudite and scientific men, for their own convenience, have formed summaries, digests, abstracts, of

their knowledge, each sentence of which contains a thousand elements of truth, that had been mastered in detail ; and, on inspection of these abbreviated forms, they are reminded of, *not taught*, the individual truths they contain. Yet these are given to children, as though they would call up in their minds the same ideas, which they suggest to their authors. But while children are subjected to the law of their Creator, that of being born in ignorance, their growth is the desideratum, which Education should supply, and their intellect cannot thrive upon what it does not understand ;—nay, more, the intellect carries as a burden whatever it does not assimilate as nourishment. An indispensable quality of a school book, then, is its adjustment to the power of the learner. No matter how far, or how little, advanced, from the starting-point of ignorance, a child may be, the teacher and the book must go to him. And this is only saying, that he cannot proceed upon his journey from a point not yet reached, but must first go through the intermediate stages. A child must know individual objects of a species, before he can understand a name descriptive of the species itself. He must know particulars, before he can understand the relations of analogy or contrast between them ; he must be accustomed to ideas of visible and tangible extension, before it is of any use to tell him of the height of the Alps or the length of the Amazon ; he must have definite notions of weight, before he can understand the force of gravitating planets ; he must be acquainted with phenomena, before he can be instructed in the laws, which harmonize their conflicting appearances ; and he must know something of the relations of men, before he is qualified to infer the duties that spring from them.

Nor should the first lessons be simple and elementary, in regard to the subject only ; but the language of the earliest ones should be literal. All figurative or metaphorical expression is based upon the literal, and can have no intelligible existence without it. After a clear apprehension of the literal meaning of words, there is a charm in their figurative applications ; because a comparison is silently made between the figurative and the literal meanings, and the resemblance perceived, awakens a delightful emotion. And this pleasure is proportioned to the distinctness of the related ideas. But how can a child understand those figures of speech, where a part is put for the whole, or the

whole for a part, when he knows nothing either of whole or part ;— where sensible objects are put for intelligible, or animate things for inanimate, when he is wholly ignorant of the subjects, likened or contrasted ? How can there be any such thing as tautology to a child, who is unacquainted with what went before ; or how can he perceive antithesis if both extremes are invisible ? In writings, beautiful from the richness of their suggestion, the tacit reference to collateral ideas is wholly lost ; and yet it is the highest proof of a master, to interweave ideas with which pleasurable emotions have become associated. Hence, a child, put into reading lessons which are beyond his ability, not only reads with a dormant understanding, but all the faculties, productive of taste, refinement, elegance, beauty, are torpid also. The faculties being unemployed, the reading, which otherwise would have been a pleasure, becomes irksome and repulsive. There is another pernicious consequence, inseparable from the practice of depositing, in the memory of children, those general and synoptical views, which they do not understand. It leads to an opposite extreme in instruction ; for when children, whose memory only has been cultivated, are really to be taught any subject with thoroughness, and for practical application ; it then becomes necessary to simplify and degrade it to the level of their feeble apprehension. But why cannot the faculties be strengthened by exercise, so that, in process of time, they can master more difficult subjects, as well as to degrade subjects to the level of weak faculties ?

In communicating the elements of knowledge to children, there is, at first, but little danger of being too minute and particular. Expansion, explanation, illustration, circumlocution,—all are necessary. But, as the child advances, less diffuseness is requisite. The prolix becomes concise. Different and more comprehensive words are used, or the same, in an enlarged signification. What was pulverized and examined in atoms, is now collected and handled in masses. Care, however, is to be taken at every step, in the first place, that what is presented to the learner should demand a conscious effort on his part, for without such an effort, there will be no increase of strength ; and, in the next place, that what is presented should be attainable by an effort, for without success, discouragement and despair will ensue. School books, however, are made for classes and not for indi-

vidual minds, and hence the best books will be more precisely adapted to some minds than to others. This difference, it is the duty of the teacher to equalize, by giving more copious explanations to the dull and unintelligent, and by tasking the strong and apprehensive with more difficult questions, connected with the text. Every sentence will have related ideas of cause and effect, of what is antecedent, consequent or collateral, which may be explored to the precise extent, indicated by different abilities. The old Balearic islanders of the Mediterranean, famed among the ancients for being the best bowmen and slingsmen, in the then known world, had in this respect a true idea of Education. They placed the food of their children upon the branches of the trees, at different heights from the ground, according to age and proficiency, and when the children had dislodged it, by bow or sling, they had their meals, but not before.

Tested by this criterion, are not many of the reading books in our schools, too elevated for the scholars? It seems generally to have been the object of the compilers of these books, to cull the most profound and brilliant passages, contained in a language, in which the highest efforts of learning, talent and genius have been embalmed. Had there been a rivalry, like that at the ancient Olympic games, where emulous nations, instead of individuals, had entered the classic lists, as competitors for renown, and our fame as a people had been staked upon our eloquent, school book miscellanies, we should have questioned the integrity of the umpire, had we not won the prize. Certainly from no ancient, probably from no other modern language, could such a selection of literary excellencies be made, as some of them exhibit ;—demonstrative arguments on the most abstruse and recondite subjects, tasking the acuteness of practised logicians, and appreciable only by them ;—brilliant passages of parliamentary debates, whose force would be irresistible, provided only that one were familiar with all contemporary institutions and events ;—scenes from dramas, beautiful if understood, but unintelligible without an acquaintance with heathen mythology ;—wit, poetry, eloquence, whose shafts, to the vision of educated minds, are quick and refulgent as lightning, but giving out to the ignorant, only an empty rumbling of words ;—every thing, in fine, may be found in their pages, which can make them, at once, worthy the highest admiration of the learned,

and wholly unintelligible to children. If I may recur to the illustration of the Balearic islanders, given above ; the prize of the young slingers and archers is invaluable, if it can be obtained, but it is placed so high as to be wholly invisible. Children can advance from the proposition, that one and one make two, up to the measurement of planetary distances, but an immense number of steps must be taken in traversing the intermediate spaces. And it is only by a similar gradation and progressiveness, that a child can advance from understanding such nursery talk, as “ the ball rolls,” “ the dog barks,” “ the horse trots,” until his mind acquires such compass and velocity of movement, that when he reads the brief declaration of the Psalmist, “ Oh, Lord, how manifold are thy works ; in wisdom hast thou made them all !” his swift conception will sweep over all known parts of the universe in an instant, and return glowing with adoration of their Creator.

Using incomprehensible reading books draws after it the inevitable consequence of bad reading. Except the mental part is well done, it is impossible to read with any rhetorical grace or propriety. Could any one, ignorant of the Latin and French languages, expect to read a Latin or French author with just modulations and expressiveness of voice, at the first or at the ten thousandth trial ? And it matters not what language we read, provided the mechanical process is animated by no vitality of thought. Something, doubtless, depends upon flexibility and pliancy of physical organs ; but should they be ever so perfect, a fitting style of delivery is born of intelligence and feeling only, and can have no other parentage. Without these, there will be no perception of impropriety, though epitaphs and epigrams are read in the same manner. If the pieces of which the reading books consist, are among the most difficult in the English language, is it not absurd to expect, that the least instructed portion of the people, speaking English—the very children—should be able to display their meaning with grace and fulness ? To encourage children to strive after a supposed natural way of expressing emotions and sentiments they do not feel, encourages deception, not sincerity ; a discord, not a harmony between the movements of mind and tongue. No rules, in regard to reading, can supply a defect in understanding what is read. Rhetorical directions, though they should equal

the variety of musical notation, would not suffice to indicate the slower or swifter enunciation of emphatic or unemphatic words, or those modulations of the human voice, which are said to amount to hundreds of thousands in number. Inflections and the rate of utterance, are too volatile and changeful to be guided by rules ; though perceptible, they are indescribable. All good reading of dramatic or poetic works springs from emotion. Nothing but the greatest histrionic power, can express an emotion without feeling it. But, once let the subject-matter of the reading lesson be understood, and, almost universally, nature will supply the proper variations of voice. A child makes no mistakes in talking, for the simple reason, that he never undertakes to say what he does not understand. Nature is the only master of rhetoric on the play-ground. Yet there, earnestness gives a quick and emphatic utterance ; the voice is roughened by combative feelings ; it is softened by all joyous and grateful emotions, and it is projected, as by the accuracy of an engineer, to strike the ear of a distant play-fellow. Nay, so perfect are undrilled children in this matter, that if any one of a group of twenty makes a false cadence or emphasis, or utters interrogatively what he meant to affirm, a simultaneous shout proclaims an observance of the blunder ; yet, if the same group were immediately put to reading from some of our school books, their many-sounding voices would shrink from their wide compass, into a one-toned instrument ;—or, what is far worse, if they affected an expression of sentiment, they would cast it so promiscuously over the sentences as to make good taste shudder. Occasionally, in some of the reading-books, there are lessons which the scholars fully understand ; and I presume it is within the observation of every person, conversant with schools, that the classes learn more from those lessons, than from the residue of the book. The moment such lessons are reached, the dull machinery quickens into life ; the moment they are passed, it becomes droning machinery again. Even the mechanical part of reading, therefore, is dependant for all its force, gracefulness and variety upon the mental.

There are other features of our reading books, too important to be unnoticed, even in a brief discussion of their merits. Two prominent characteristics are, the incompleteness of the subjects of the reading lessons, considered each by itself ; and the discordance be-

tween them, when viewed in succession. Lord Kaimes maintains, in substance, that there is an original, instinctive propensity or faculty of the mind, which demands the completion or finishing of what has been begun, and is displeased by an untimely or abrupt termination. Other metaphysicians attest the same doctrine. Whether such mental tendency be native or superinduced, its practical value can hardly be overestimated; and whatever conduces to establish or confirm it, should be sedulously fostered. In our state of civilization, all questions have become complex. Hence, an earnest desire to learn all the facts, to consider all the principles, which rightfully go to modify conclusions, is a copious and unfailing source of practical wisdom. Error often comes, not from any mistake in our judgments, upon the premises given; but from omitting views, as much belonging to the subject, as those which are considered. We often see men, who will develop one part of a case with signal ability, and yet are always in the wrong, because they overlook other parts, equally essential to a sound result. Thus error becomes the consequence of seeing only parts of truth. Often, the want of the hundredth part to make a whole, renders the possession of the other ninety-nine valueless. If one planet were left out of our astronomical computations, the motions of the solar system could not be explained, though all about the others were perfectly known. Children, therefore, should not only be taught, but habituated, as far as possible, to compass the subject of inquiry, to explore its less obvious parts, and, if I may so speak, to circumnavigate it; so that their minds will be impatient of a want of completeness and thoroughness, and will resent one-sided views and half-presentations. Merely a habit of mind in a child of seeking for well-connected, well-proportioned views, would give the surest augury of a great man. Now, if there be such a tendency in the human mind, urging it to search out the totality of any subject, and rewarding success, not only with utility, but with a lively pleasure, is not the reading pupil defrauded both of the benefit and the enjoyment, by having his mind forcibly transferred, in rapid succession, from a few glimpses of one subject to as few glimpses of another? On looking into a majority of the reading books in our schools, I believe it will be found, that they contain more separate pieces than leaves. Often, these pieces are antipodal to each other in style, treatment and

subject. There is a solemn inculcation of the doctrine of universal peace on one page, and a martial, slaughter-breathing poem on the next. I have a reading book, in which a catalogue of the names of all the books of the Old and New Testaments is followed immediately, and on the same page, by a "receipt to make good red ink." But what is worst of all is, that the lessons, generally, have not, in any logical sense, either a beginning or an end. They are splendid passages, carved out of an eloquent oration or sermon, without premises or conclusion ;—a page of compressed thought, taken from a didactic poem, without the slightest indication of the system of doctrines embodied in the whole ;—extracts from forensic arguments, without any statement of the facts of the case, so that the imagination of the young reader is inflamed, while those faculties which determine the fitness and relevancy of the advocate's appeals are wholly unexercised ;—forty or fifty lines of the tenderest pathos, unaccompanied by any circumstances, tending to awaken sympathy, and leaving the children to guess both at cause and consolation ;—and while no dramatist dares violate an absurd rule, that every tragedy written for the stage, shall have five acts, a single isolated scene, taken from the middle of one of them, seems to be considered a fair proportion for a child. Probably in a school of an average number of scholars, three or four of these pieces would be read at each exercise, so that, even if the pieces were intelligible by themselves, the contradictory impressions will effectually neutralize each other. Surely, if, according to Lord Kaimes, there be an innate desire or propensity to *finish*, we should expect that the children would manifest it, in such cases, by desiring to have done with the book forever.

What the ancient rhetoricians said of a literary work,—that it should always have a beginning, a middle, and an end,—is more emphatically true of reading lessons for children. Each piece should have the completeness of a fable or an allegory. Were a single figure cut from the historic canvass of some master painter, and presented to us by itself, we should suffer vexation from the blankness of the mutilated part, instead of enjoying the pleasure of a perfect whole.

But, perhaps it will be said that children like variety, and therefore, a diversity of subjects is demanded. But there is a wide dis-

inction, between what is variegated and what is heterogeneous or conflicting. Quite as well may it be said, that children like continuity, not less than variety. Agencies working to a common end, elements expanding and evolving into a full and symmetrical development, present a variety more accordant to nature, than that of patchwork. An easy and gliding transition from topic to topic, is far preferable to a sudden revulsion, which seems, as it were, to arrest the mental machinery and work it backwards. Besides, all needful variety is as attainable in long pieces, as in short ones. An author may pass from grave to humorous, from description to narration, from philosophizing to moralizing, or even from prose to poetry, without shocking the mind by precipitous leaps from one subject to another.

Another mental exercise of the highest value, is not only overlooked, but rendered wholly impossible by this violent transference of the mind through a series of repugnant subjects. The true order of mental advancement is, from the primitive meaning of words to their modified meaning in particular connections, and then to a clear apprehension of the import of sentences and paragraphs. After these, come two other mental processes, which are the crowning constituents of intellectual greatness. The first process is a comparison with each other, of all the parts presented, in order to discern their agreement or repugnance, and to form a judgment of their conduciveness to a proposed result. For this purpose, the mind must summon the whole train of thought into its presence, and see for itself, whether the conclusion is authorized, to which its assent is demanded. Here the reader must see whether the part, he now reads, as compared with the preceding, is consistent or contradictory. Otherwise he may be marched and counter-marched through all regions of belief, and even be made to tread backwards in his own footsteps without knowing it. How can a juror judge of the soundness or fallacy of an advocate's argument, if he cannot reproduce it and compare its different points ;—if he cannot, if a military phrase may be used, bring up the long column of arguments and deploy them into line, so as to survey them all at a glance ? Such a habit of mind confers a wonderful superiority on its possessor ; and therefore it should be cultivated by all practicable means. Great as it is in some men, it has grown up, under favoring circumstances, from the feeblest beginnings ; and the minds of all children

may be managed so as to stifle or strengthen it. Of course, all consecutiveness of thought is dispersed by a scrap book.

I will take a few examples from a reading book, now in use in some of our schools. A most humorous disquisition "On the head-dress of ladies," is immediately followed by another disquisition "On a future state of eternal happiness or perdition;" a passage from Milton's "Creation of the world," leads on "The facetious history of John Gilpin;" Thompson's "Hymn to the Deity," ushers in "Merrick's chameleon;" and two minutes reading from Blair's "Sermon on the death of Christ," precedes Lord Chesterfield's "Speech on Pensions." Surely, the habit of mind, I have endeavored to describe, is here impossible. There is no continuity in the subject-matter for the mind to act on.

The preceding remarks contemplate the reader or hearer, as engaged in fixing the whole train of the author's thought in his own mind, for the purpose of comparing its different parts. But to make reading in the highest degree valuable, another mental process still is necessary. It is not enough merely to discern the agreement or disagreement of the associated parts, heard or read; but in the progress of the exercise, we ought to look to the right and left, and compare the positions of the speaker or writer with our own observation, experience and former judgment; so as to obtain new arguments for our own opinions, where there is a coincidence, and be led to re-examine them with conscientious impartiality when opposed. In this way only, can we modify and correct our own views by the help of other minds. In this way only, can we give permanence to our acquisitions; and what is rapidity in acquisition, without durability in retention? It is the absence of these two mental exercises which makes so vast a portion of the reading of our community utterly barren. Of course, only the older scholars can fairly realize this degree of intelligent reading. But after a little practice, all children are capable of reading with such an open and inquiring mind, that if any thing occurs in the lesson, which is connected with their own recent experience or observation, the two things will be immediately associated. This will grow into a habit of thinking not only of what they read, but of associating and comparing their previous knowledge upon the same subject with it; and it will be the best possible stimulant to the inventive powers. It

will also prevent them from blindly adopting whatever is communicated to them by others. They will acquire such a power, at once of expanded views and of thorough investigation, that if afterwards, in the practical business of life, any plan or course of policy is presented to them, and there be a difficulty in it, they will see it ; and if there be any way of obviating that difficulty, they will see that also.

To mitigate the calamity of unintelligent reading, various inventions have been sought out ; by some of which it may have been slightly relieved, while others seem wholly illusive. Spelling books have been prepared, purporting to give synonymous words, arranged in parallel columns. On some pages, two columns, on others, three columns are found, where the words, which are placed horizontally, in regard to each other, are alleged to be synonymous. Thus single words are supposed to be defined by single words, as in the following example, which is taken from one of them :—

“ comedy tragedy drama ”

It is a remark of Dr. Blair, that “ hardly in any language are there two words, that convey the same idea.” Dr. Campbell, also, the author of that able work, “ *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*,” observes, that “ there are few words in any language, (particularly such as relate to operations and feelings of the mind,) which are strictly univocal.” To teach children that any considerable number, even of the primitive words in the English language, can be reduced to doublets and triplets of synonyms ; or that there are many cases, where words can be interchangeably used, would subject them to the certainty, both of being mistaken by others, and of mistaking whatever they might hear or read ; and it would destroy the power of aptness in the selection of words, upon which all the accuracy, elegance and force of diction depend. Surely, if a large majority of the words of our language have each, one or two synonymous words, it would seem advisable for the government of the “ *Republic of Letters*,” at once to reduce it to one half or one third of its present bulk, by discarding the superfluous parts, and thus save the young the labor of learning and the old the trouble of writing and reading a double or treble-sized vocabulary. But if, as is further observed by Dr. Blair, any person “ conversant with the propriety of the language, will always be able

to observe something, that distinguishes any two of its words," then a book would be greatly to be preferred, which should show that it has no synonyms. Even if our language furnished synonyms, and these were carefully collated, according to the above plan, it would seem quite as possible for the learner, with a little additional labor, to get two or three words, without any glimmer of meaning, as to get one. It is rarely possible to explain any word of unknown meaning by any other single word. Our most common words are susceptible, probably, of a hundred significations, according to the connexion in which they are used. Their value is constantly changing, according to the context. It is like the value of pieces upon a chess board ; the same piece, in one position, being almost worthless, in another position, commanding the game. It is this fact, which makes it such vanity and uselessness to read words, without reference to their significations.

Another method for teaching significations consists in the use of the dictionary. This is far less fallacious than the former, because no dictionary ever defines by a single word. It usually gives a number of words and short sentences, from a comparison of which, the principal idea, common to them all, can be separated from the accessory ideas, peculiar to each. Although, therefore, it is a meagre resource for a learner, it is far better than any definition, by a single inflexible word, can be. There are, however, very serious objections to this mode. Should the pupil take the words of the dictionary, in course, he would study double the number which he will have occasion to use in after-life ; and it seems a misfortune, that scholars, who do not go to school half long enough to learn what is needful, should spend half their time while there, in learning what is superfluous. Nor do dictionaries indicate what words are in reputable use, what are more appropriate to poetical, what to prose writings, and so forth. But should the words to be studied or omitted be marked for the learner, or a dictionary be prepared, containing the former only ; still an insuperable objection would remain, in consequence of the order, or rather the entire want of order, in regard to meaning, in which the words are presented. For, while the words come alphabetically, the ideas come chaotically. The learner is whirled backwards and forwards, carried through time and space, presented with matter and

mind, principal and incident, action and passion, all in a single column. Nothing can be conceived more heterogeneous, than the ideas necessarily resulting from an alphabetical arrangement of the words ; and were children to be drilled at much length on such exercises, it would argue great soundness of mind, if their intellects were not a little unsettled. Suppose a professor in the natural sciences, instead of teaching his sciences in a natural order, should go into the fields, and halting any where, at random, should take a spot no larger than is sufficient for the growth of a single blade of grass, and should proceed to lecture upon whatever was found at that single point. He would be obliged to run over the subjects of geology, mineralogy, chemistry, botany, and perhaps entomology, without leaving the spot. Nor would this be a course half so devious and erratic, as that of studying definitions, through the columns of a dictionary.

Another device to fill vacuity by pouring in vacuity, is this ;—a book is prepared, in which the spelling and reading lessons alternate. First come a few columns of words, and then a page of apothegms and synopses of universal truths, not occupying, perhaps, more than a line each ; some one word in the spelling columns being incorporated into each of these short sentences. The force of the reasons against the preceding mode is but little abated, when applied to this. This motley company of sentences repels all interest on the part of the learner. Topics, more alien from each other and more bewildering to the mind, could not be found, if one were to stick a pin through all the leaves of a book and then to read continuously all the sentences, through which the puncture was made. As many-colored and diverse-shaped objects, flitting swiftly before the eye, will make no stable impression upon the retina ; so a multitude of incongruous ideas and feelings, trooping hurriedly before the mental vision, can leave no enduring traces of outline, aspect or quality upon the mind. A rapid succession of discordant images will inflict distraction upon the mind of an adult ;—how much more certain are they to do it, upon that of a child ? The power of passing abruptly from one subject of thought to another, without mental disturbance, requires long habit and familiarity with the matters presented. Children can have neither.

But I will not occupy further time in exposing empirical plans for

acquiring a ready and apposite use of our language. After experimenting with every scheme, I believe we shall be driven back to a single resource ;—and not reluctantly, for that resource is sure and adequate. Language is to be learned, where it is used ; as skill in handling the implements of an art, is acquired by practising with them upon their appropriate objects. It is to be learned by conversation, and by the daily reading of such books, as with the aid of free questioning on the part of the pupil, and full explanations on that of the teacher, can be thoroughly mastered. The ideas of the learner are to be brought out and set, objectively, before his own eyes, like a picture. Any error can then be pointed out. The boundary line can be traced, between his knowledge and his ignorance. A pupil may recite a lesson with literal correctness, respecting the boundaries of the different States in the Union ; and it may be impossible for the teacher to determine, whether this is done by a mental reference to divisional lines and adjacent territory, or whether it is done by remembering the words, as they stand in the geography. But if the pupil can delineate a correct map of the United States, on a blackboard, it is then certain, that he has the prototype of it in his mind. So if the pupil applies language to something, known to both parties, the teacher can then perceive, *whether the language is adjusted to the thing* ; and, if it is not, he can ascertain whether the error arises from a misconception of the thing, or from an unskillful use of words in describing it. Oral instruction, therefore, to some extent, respecting known objects and such as can be graphically described, should precede reading ; and should accompany it ever afterwards, though, perhaps, with diminishing frequency. Early practice, in noting the real distinctions in the qualities of sensible substances, will give accuracy to language ; and when the child passes from present and sensible objects to unseen or mental ones, a previously acquired accuracy of language will impart accuracy to the new ideas. Hence, too, the scenes of the first reading lessons should be laid in the household, the play-ground, among the occupations of men, and the surrounding objects of nature, so that the child's notions can be rectified at every step in the progress. This rectification will be impossible, if the notions of the pupil can be brought to no common and intelligible standard. We must believe, too, that the Creator of the human mind, and of the material

world in which it is placed, established a harmony and correspondence between them ; so that the objects of nature are pre-adapted to the development of the intellect, as the tempers, dispositions and manners of the family are to develop the moral powers. The objects of natural history,—descriptions of beasts, birds, fishes, insects, trees, flowers, and unorganized substances, should form the subjects of the earliest intellectual lessons. A knowledge of these facts lays the foundation for a knowledge of the principles or sciences, which respectively grow out of them. We are physically connected with earth, air, water, light ; we are dependant, for health and comfort, upon a knowledge of their properties and uses, and many of the vastest structures of the intellect are reared upon these foundations. Lineally related to these is the whole family of the useful arts. These classes of subjects are not only best calculated to foster the early growth of the perceptive, inventive and reasoning powers ; but the language appropriate to them excludes vagueness and ambiguity, and compels every mistake to betray itself. Voyages and travels, also, accompanied as they always should be, with geography, present definite materials, both for thought and expression. Just as early as a habit of exactness is formed in using words to express things, all the subjects of consciousness may be successively brought within the domain of instruction. The ideal world can then be entered, as it were with a lamp in the hand, and all its wonders portrayed. Affection, justice, veracity, impartiality, self-sacrifice, love to man and love to God,—all carried out into action,—can be illustrated by examples, after the learner has acquired a medium, through which he can see all the circumstances, which make deeds magnanimous, heroic, god-like. Here the biography of great and good men belongs. This is a department of literature, equally vivifying to the intellect and the morals ;—bestowing useful knowledge and inspiring noble sentiments. And much of the language appropriate to it almost belongs to another dialect ;—fervid, electric, radiant. At the earliest practicable period, let composition or translation be commenced. By composition, I do not mean an essay “On Friendship,” or “On Honor ;” nor that a young Miss of twelve years should write a homily “On the duties of a Queen,” or a lad, impatient of his nonage, “On the shortness of human life ;”—but that the learner should apply, on familiar

subjects, the language he thinks best, to the ideas and emotions he perceives clearest and feels strongest, *to see how well he can make them fit each other*,—first in sentences, or short paragraphs, then in more extended productions. If the pupil's knowledge outruns his language,—as is often the case with the most promising,—then a more copious diction is to be sought ; but if language overgrows ideas, it is to be reduced, though it be by knife and cautery.

It is only in this way,—by reading or translating good authors, aided by oral instructions and by lexicographers, but, most of all, by early habit,—that any one can acquire such easy mastery over the copiousness and flexibility of our mother tongue, as to body forth definitely, and at will, any thought or thing, or any combination of thoughts and things, found in the consciousness of men, or in the amplitude of nature ;—in no other way, can any one acquire that terseness and condensing force of expression, which is a constituent in the highest oratory, which clusters weightiest thoughts into briefest spaces, reminding without repeating, each sentence speeding straight onward to the end, while every salient epithet opens deep vistas to the right and left ;—and, in this way alone, can any one ever learn the picture-words of that tongue, wherewith the poet repays nature four-fold for all her beauties, giving her back brighter landscapes, and clearer waters, and sweeter melodies, than any she had ever lent to him. By such processes alone, can one of the most wonderful gifts of God,—the faculty of speech,—be dutifully cultivated and enlarged.

It would be rendering a useful service, to follow out, rightly, and in detail, the natural consequences of this imperfect manner of teaching our language, after the children have passed from the enforced routine of the school room, to a free choice of their own intellectual amusements and recreations. I can here only hint at them. The mere language of sensation and of appetite is common to all. Even the most illiterate are familiar with it. Every one, too, either from his own experience, or from the observation of others, is made acquainted with the emotions of fear, hope, jealousy, anger, revenge, and with the explosive phraseology in which those passions are vented. Now the diction, appropriate and almost peculiar to the manifestations of the coarser and more animal part of our nature, is almost as

distinct as though it were a separate language, from the style, in which questions of social right and duty, questions of morals, and even of philosophy, when popularly treated, are discussed. Young minds love excitement, and, to very many of those, who are just entering upon the stage of life, books furnish the readiest and the most reputable means for mental stimulus. What else, then, can reasonably be expected, than that the graduates of our school rooms, who, by acquiring a knowledge of the coarser and more sensual parts of our language, possess a key to that kind of reading, which is mainly conversant with the lower propensities of human nature, should use the key with which they have been furnished, to satisfy desires, which nature has imparted. But, having no key, wherewith to open the treasures of intellect, of taste, of that humane literature, which is purified from the dross of base passions, they turn away from these elevating themes, in weariness and disgust, and thus stifle the better aspirations of their nature. These treasures are locked up in a language they do not understand ; and no person will long endure the weariness of reading without thought or emotion. May not this explain, in part, at least, why our youth of both sexes, who wish to know something, or to appear to know something, of what is called the literature of the day, spend months and years over the despicable “love and murder” books, by which the reading portion of mankind is so sorely afflicted ;—books, which inflame passions and appetites, that are strong enough by nature, while they blind and stupefy every faculty and sentiment, which exalt the character into wisdom and excellence. The most limited fund of words, and a mere intellectual pauperism in powers of thought, are abundantly sufficient to enable one to understand a bucanier’s history and all its intoxicating incidents of piracies, murders, and scuttled ships ;—or, to get vivid notions of loathsome crimes, perpetrated by the unfortunate victims of ignorance and of vicious institutions. For the readers of such books, the best minds in the world might as well have never been created. By a different course of training, many of our youth, whose imaginations are now revelling over these flagitious works, might have been prepared for high enjoyment won from companionship with noble characters, from a study of their own spiritual natures, or from an in-

vestigation of the sublime laws of the material universe, and the operation of its beneficent physical agencies.

Another large class of our citizens scarcely consult any oracle, either for their literature or for their politics, but the daily newspaper. Wholly ignorant of the language, in which argumentative and profound disquisitions, on subjects of policy or questions of government are carried on ; why should we wonder, that so many of them feel less interest in dispassionate, instructive appeals to reason, than in the savage idioms of party warfare ? The states of mind thus excited are wholly incompatible with discriminating judgment, with impartiality, with that deliberation and truth-seeking anxiety, which are indispensable to the formation of correct opinions and which lead to conduct, worthy of free citizens. I would not attribute too efficient an agency to this cause, but if it only tends to such disastrous results, by the slightest approximation, it furnishes another powerful argument for a thorough reform in our practice.

During the first year of my officiating as Secretary of the Board, very numerous applications were made to me, from almost all parts of the State, to recommend class books for the schools, or to state what books were considered best by the Board, or by myself. As the Board had adopted no order, nor were invested with any express authority, by law, upon the subject, I uniformly abstained even from expressing any opinion ; but for the purpose of learning, authentically, what were the prevalent views of the community, I inserted, in my last circular to the school committees, the following question : “ Would it be generally acceptable to the friends of Education in your town, to have the Board of Education recommend books for the use of the Schools ? ” This gave to school committees ample opportunity to consult with the friends of Education, in their respective towns, and opened a way to obtain a full and fair representation of the wishes of the public. From this, as the principal source of information, somewhat corroborated and extended by other means, it appears, that the friends of Education, in twenty towns, containing, in the aggregate, a population of about thirty-five thousand inhabitants, declare that such a recommendation would not be acceptable. In one, containing eighteen thousand inhabitants, they say, “ we feel so well satisfied, with our own selection of books, as to have no wish,

farther than to see how far the views of different practical men agree." Ten towns wish to have the Board *recommend*, but not *prescribe*; two towns, to have the Board *recommend* and *prescribe*; and one, that the Board may be directed to *prescribe* by an act of the Legislature. It also appears, that the friends of Education in towns containing more than seven-eighths of the population of the State, are in favor of having the Board of Education *recommend* books for the use of the Schools.

The expediency of a *recommendation*, by the Board, of class books for the schools, leaving it optional with the committees to adopt such recommendation or not, is a question so exclusively within the competency of the Board, that I shall not presume to express any opinion concerning it. Considerations, for and against such recommendation, may be supposed to bear with different degrees of force, in regard to different species of books;—as geographies, grammars, and spelling or reading books. In my Report of last year, I set forth some of the very serious inconveniences, resulting from the multiplicity of books, now in use. I will here only add, that if the Board should assume the labor of examining and recommending any kind of school books, I trust they will not allow so favorable an opportunity to pass, without securing a better quality of materials and workmanship, than go to the formation of some books now in use. It is too obvious to be mentioned, that in case of a uniformity of books, they would be furnished much cheaper than at present, as measures would, of course, be taken, to prevent monopoly.

As the law now stands, in order to entitle a town to receive its distributive share of the income of the School Fund, the committee must make oath, that the town, "at their last annual meeting, raised the sum of ——— dollars, *to pay the wages of instructors solely!*" In preparing the last "Annual Abstract," I found this certificate the subject of frequent alteration. Although the law prescribed a certain form of oath, as a condition precedent, the school committees altered the form, and then made oath to a form unknown to the law. The reason was, that very few towns raised money "to pay the wages of instructors solely," and, therefore, though they had raised a sufficient sum for schools to entitle them to a share of the fund, they

had not raised it in the particular form, contemplated by the certificate.

I endeavored this year to ascertain the form of the vote, adopted by the towns, in raising school money. Owing, however, to a non-compliance on the part of many school committees, with my request, I have obtained a copy of the form used the current year, from only one hundred and ten towns. But six of these one hundred and ten towns raised money "to pay the wages of instructors solely." In almost all the others, the terms used are "for the support of schools," or some equivalent expression. It is very desirable, that the certificate should be conformed to the vote, or the vote to the certificate.

In my Report of last year, I exposed the alarming deficiency of moral and religious instruction, then found to exist in our schools. That deficiency, in regard to religious instruction, could only be explained by supposing, that school committees, whose duty it is to prescribe school books, had not found any books at once, expository of the doctrines of revealed religion, and, also free from such advocacy of the "tenets" of particular sects of Christians, as brought them, in their opinion, within the scope of the legal prohibition. And hence, they felt obliged to exclude books, which, but for their denominational views, they would have been glad to introduce. No candid mind could ever, for a moment, accept this as evidence of an indifference to moral and religious instruction in the schools; but only as proof that proper manuals had not been found, by which the great object of moral and religious instruction could be secured, without any infringement of the statutory regulation. The time for the committees to make another return, not having yet arrived, it is impossible to say, whether books, having the above object in view, have been since introduced into any more of the schools. I am happy, however, to say, that a knowledge of that deficiency, then for the first time exposed to the public, has turned the attention of some of the friends of Education to the subject, and that efforts are now making to supply the desideratum. Of course, I shall not be here understood, as referring to the Scriptures, as it is well known, that they are used in almost all the schools, either as a devotional or as a reading book.

I close this second Report, inspired by opposite reasons to renewed exertions in this sacred cause ;—being not more encouraged by what has already been accomplished, than stimulated by what remains to be done.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

Boston, Dec. 26, 1838.

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, in obedience to the law of the 20th April, 1837, beg leave to submit to the Legislature their Third Annual Report.

THE Conventions directed by law to be attended by the Secretary of the Board, in each county of the Commonwealth, have been duly held. The presence of teachers, of the members of school committees, and of the friends of education, generally, at these meetings, is, of course, voluntary, and must, therefore, vary with circumstances. At several of the Conventions, there has been a gratifying attendance. Discussions on important subjects, connected with education, have been had at these meetings. Among the most prominent subjects considered, have been the education of children in factories; and the supply of books well adapted for the wants of the people, generally, and especially of the young. These discussions have, in many cases, been sustained in a manner, which evinces deep interest in the subjects considered. At the several county Conventions, addresses were delivered, by the Secretary of the Board, on the *necessity* of education, as a preparation for all the great personal and social duties. It is believed that, by the various exercises at these meetings, an increase of zeal has been produced, in that part of the community, to which we must most directly look for the improvement of our Schools.

The influence proceeding from these Conventions, is regarded as one of the most important instruments, which can be employed, for raising the standard of Common School Education. The great majority of the people unquestionably entertain proper feelings on the subject. They prize education as they ought, and wish their children to enjoy its advantages. Where the condition of the Schools is bad, and manifestly inadequate to the due preparation of the young for the duties of life, (as far as that preparation is to be acquired at places of education,) it may be presumed to result, in most cases, from ignorance of what has been accomplished in other parts of the Commonwealth, and might be effected in all, by proper exertions on the part of those, to whom this important trust is confided by law. Inasmuch as zeal on this subject is almost sure to follow in the train of intelligence, the Board know of no agency which can more safely be relied upon, to awaken and sustain the proper interest, than public meetings, in every part of the Commonwealth, at which the friends and conductors of education may have the opportunity of communicating to each other and the public, the results of their experience and observations. Such assemblies are entirely in accordance with the character of our political institutions, which aim to effect the great objects of human society, as far as possible, by the voluntary action of the people; and which look to the government, only for such measure of aid and organization, as is needed to call into the highest action, the enlightened sense of the community. It is confidently believed, that the manner in which the county Conventions have been attended, the character of the addresses, discussions, and pro-

ceedings, and the influences they have been calculated to exercise, are such, and such only, as were desired and intended by the Legislature, in passing the law, which makes it the duty of the Secretary to be present. No sectarian or party interest has, in any single case, been manifested ; and those attending the meetings have come together, as on ground common to every good citizen. It may be regarded as by no means one of the least beneficial results of holding these Conventions, that they unite, in an object of permanent and sacred interest, all those who, however alienated from each other, in reference to other topics of public concernment, take a lively and a common interest in the welfare of the rising generation.

In the course of the past year, the Normal schools, or seminaries for the qualification of teachers, at Lexington and Barre, have gone into operation. The Board refer to their last Annual Report, for the detail of the steps taken, in the location of these institutions. As it was very important to secure the highest attainable degree of qualification, in the immediate superintendence of these schools, much time was unavoidably required for the selection and appointment of instructors. The arrangements for the school at Lexington were first completed, by the choice of Mr. Cyrus Pierce, who, at the time of his election, was engaged with uncommon success, as principal of the public school at Nantucket. The Normal school at Lexington, it will be recollected, was exclusively designed for females ; and, as it went into operation at a season of the year, (the month of July,) when female teachers are generally under engagement in schools, the attendance the first term was not large. This circumstance, however, was the less to be regretted, as it enabled the principal of the school to proceed in its organization, with the caution desirable in an institution of a novel character in this country. After a vacation of two weeks, the second term commenced, about the middle of October, with a considerably increased attendance. The present number of pupils is twenty-one. At the same time, a model school, connected with the institution, was put into operation. This is a school attended by thirty pupils, of both sexes, between the ages of six and ten years, gathered from the several school districts in the town. This school is under the general superintendence of the principal of the Normal school, but is taught by the pupils of that institution. It is visited every day by the principal, as a listener and observer, and occasion for remark is taken, on the manner in which the duty of instruction is performed, by the pupils of the Normal school. Occasionally, the principal instructs the model school, in the presence of all the pupils of the Normal school, who consequently have the benefit of his example. The establishment of the model school is understood to have been very favorably viewed by the community, and a much larger number of children could have been obtained for it, had it been practicable to receive more to advantage.

The Normal school, at Barre, went into operation on the 4th of September, under the superintendence of Mr. S. P. Newman, who had for many years filled, with reputation, the office of a professor in Bowdoin College, in the State of Maine. The school at Barre, for reasons intimated in the last Annual Report, was opened for males and females, and thirty-nine pupils attended during the term. The resort was so great, that it was found necessary to employ an assistant teacher ; but, as the schools kept for females are generally opened in the Spring, and as the larger part of the pupils are of that sex, it is presumed that a reduction of numbers will take place, at the third term.

It is supposed that a main cause, why the resort of pupils at Barre has been greater than at Lexington, is to be found in the circumstances, that both sexes have been admitted at Barre, and females only at Lexington ; and that pupils have been received for a single term at the former place, and not at the latter. The course pursued on the first point, as was explained in the Report of the Board the last year, has been in conformity

with what was understood to be the public preference in the two places. The same reason existed for permitting a shorter term at Barre, united with a wish to ascertain, by the practical operation of the two plans, which will be entitled to preference, as the permanent rule. The Board is strongly inclined to the opinion, that a year, at least, should be passed at the Normal schools by each pupil ; but it may be found, on trial, that the advantages of a shorter term are sufficient to outweigh the obvious objections to it. A model school has not yet been organized at Barre ; but it is proposed to connect one with the Normal school, as soon as the requisite arrangements, for that purpose, can be effected.

The Board express themselves with entire approbation of the institutions at Lexington and Barre, with respect both to the fidelity with which instruction has been dispensed, and the disposition and capacity of the greater portion of the pupils. They feel that a degree of success, of the most gratifying character, has been realized, in both institutions. At an expense to the Commonwealth of less than one thousand dollars, for the past year, two seminaries, for the qualification of teachers, have been organized, in commodious buildings, with adequate libraries and apparatus, and under the superintendence of experienced and distinguished instructors. The combination of circumstances which has produced so desirable a result, by the application of so moderate a sum from the treasury, must be considered as an event peculiarly auspicious to the cause of education.

The instructions given in the Normal schools have, under the regulations adopted by the Board, been directed to the two great objects of an institution for the qualification of teachers, viz. 1st, to impart to the pupils a more correct and thorough knowledge of the various branches, required by law to be taught in our schools, and 2d, to teach the principles of communicating instruction, both in theory, and in practice at a model school, to be connected with the main institution.

The importance of these two branches of instruction, and their connection with each other, in a seminary for the qualification of teachers, is too obvious, to require an elaborate explanation. Few persons, who have been called to the performance of the duty of a member of a school-committee, can have failed to observe, that, of those who offer themselves as teachers, a large number are destitute of an accurate and thorough acquaintance with the various branches of knowledge, required by law to be taught in the schools. They neither read nor write, well ; are deficient in the science of numbers ; and have an imperfect knowledge of the grammar of our language : but they have a foundation in all these branches. It is not to be expected, that a majority of the district school teachers in the State can afford the time, for a very long and thorough revision of the branches of knowledge, which they are required to teach. But it is, nevertheless, true, that much may be learned, even in a short time, passed with that particular object in view, in an institution expressly devoted to that object, and at an age when the mind has attained some maturity, and the moral motives to diligence are powerfully felt. There can be no doubt, it is believed, in the mind of any person practically acquainted with the subject, that if, of two persons of equal capacity, possessing beforehand the usual average proficiency in the branches to be taught, one should immediately take charge of a school, without any previous preparation, and the other should devote even so short a period as three months, to a diligent review of all those branches,—a review to be made under the direction, and with the aid, of an accomplished and faithful instructor,—the advantage would be greatly on the side of the last, in commencing his duties as a teacher.

But the art of instruction, that is, of communicating knowledge to the youthful mind, and aiding and encouraging its own efforts ; the art of governing a school, or rather, of so forming and influencing it, as to supersede the necessity of that mixture of harsh discipline and capricious indulgence,

which is called government, is also one of great difficulty and importance. It has its principles, which lie deep in the philosophy of our nature. Some of the best talent in several countries, for the last generation, has been employed in elucidating these principles. To comprehend them thoroughly, and with the ability to apply them practically, is the endowment of a gifted few. A thoroughly-accomplished teacher is as rarely to be met with, as an individual of the highest merit in any of the professions, or other most responsible callings in life. If these considerations, in one view of the subject, should lead us to despair of furnishing many of our schools with teachers of this description, they should lead us directly to the conclusion, that, for the practice of such an art, some specific preparation is far better than none. The preparation may be inadequate, but nothing is so bad as wholly to want preparation. Of two individuals, otherwise equally well qualified, and proposing to engage in the business of teaching school, if one should enter upon his duties, without any special instruction in them, and no guide but his own judgment, and the recollections of his own experience at school, (possibly an indifferent school,) while the other should pass even so short a period as three months, in an institution exclusively for the qualification of teachers, where he should be carefully instructed in the principles of teaching and governing a school, can there be a doubt, that the latter would be in a condition to give by far the greatest aid and encouragement to his pupils?

These strong and obvious considerations have, in other countries, led to the adoption of Normal schools, as a part of the regular system of public instruction, and it would seem that they are as decisive of the question of the utility of such institutions in America, as in Europe. They are the considerations, it is presumed, which led the Legislature promptly to engage in the experiment now in progress, and on which the attention of the friends of education throughout the country is anxiously fixed. The Board ask permission, in closing this part of their Report, to quote the words of one of the most distinguished philosophers of the age, on this subject. "We need an institution for the formation of better teachers; and, until this step is taken, we can make no important progress. The most crying want, in this Commonwealth, is the want of accomplished teachers. We boast of our schools; but our schools do comparatively little, for want of educated instructors. Without good teaching, a school is but a name. An institution for training men to train the young would be a fountain of living waters, sending forth streams to refresh present and future ages."*

Great interest has been evinced, in the establishment of a Normal school in Plymouth county. As premises furnishing adequate accommodation were not to be obtained, in a convenient situation, it was deemed advisable, by those desirous of effecting the object, to raise a fund of ten thousand dollars for that purpose. The contributions toward this fund have been completed; but difficulties have arisen, as to the location of the school. This point has been referred to disinterested persons, not resident in the county. The efforts made to secure the establishment of this institution have been of the most praiseworthy character, and a zeal, never before witnessed in the cause of education, has been awakened in most of the towns in Plymouth county.

The last Annual Report contains a statement of the steps taken by the Board, to give effect to the act of the 12th of April, 1837, by which the school districts of the Commonwealth were authorized to form school libraries, by a small annual appropriation for the purchase of books. In the course of the year, ten volumes have been published by Messrs. Marsh, Capen, Lyon, and Webb, under the sanction of the Board, being the first ten of a series, to be issued under the name of the 'School Library.' Other volumes will follow as rapidly as they can pass through the press. In giving their joint sanction to the volumes thus published, nothing was further

* Rev. Dr. Channing.

from the intentions of the Board, than to attempt any control over the free choice of the committees, employed to purchase books for the district libraries. But it is well known to all, who have turned their thoughts to the subject, that an ample supply of instructive books, in the various departments of useful knowledge, does not exist throughout the community. The establishment of social libraries, in the various towns of the Commonwealth, has ever been deemed very desirable ; and, since increased attention has been turned to the subject of education, of late years, it has been universally admitted, that the collection of a district School Library, in each district, is an object scarcely inferior in importance to the support of the school. In fact, it is essentially a part of the School System ; for to what avail are our children taught to read, if good books are not accessible to them ? It was doubtless in this view of the subject, that the Legislature of the Commonwealth, following the example which had been recently set in New York, (a State, whose enlightened and liberal care of the interests of education is entitled to the highest praise,) was induced, in the law already alluded to, to authorize a small annual appropriation for the purchase of School Libraries, *by those districts disposed to make it*. It was no part of the design of the Legislature, to limit the discretion of the school committees, in making the selection ; nor have the Board of Education, in sanctioning the publication of a series of works well adapted for School Libraries, designed or attempted any interference with the free choice of the committees. They have as little wish as right, to exercise such dictation. They have supposed, however, that it would be an acceptable service to committees, hesitating in the multitude of publications daily sent forth from the press,—often forced on their notice by itinerant venders,—to have a selection of volumes recommended to them by a body of individuals, who cannot be suspected of any selfish interest, and whose unanimous approval of each volume excludes the possibility of the intrusion of sectarian, or party prejudices. If the members of the Board may be permitted to judge of the wants and wishes of their fellow-citizens, by what they have experienced, individually, as parents and school-committee men, such a recommendation, claiming no other character than that of a suggestion, to be adopted or rejected by those concerned, cannot prove other than acceptable. It will still remain, equally as before, within the option of school committees, to purchase such books as they may think best adapted to the wants of their districts. They may purchase those recommended by the Board ; or give the preference to other selections, prepared in other places ; or they may make a free choice themselves, out of the almost innumerable volumes daily appearing.

The Board believe, also, that the inspection of the volumes already published, and of the titles of those proposed, (a list of which is subjoined,) will effectually remove all apprehension which may have been felt, that the sanction, by the Board, of books suitable for a School Library, might have a sinister effect, either positive or negative, in reference to religious instruction. While the organization of the Board is itself, (it is hoped,) a sufficient guaranty, that no such influence could be designed, the examination of the books already published, and of the list of those in preparation, will sufficiently show, that no such effect has ever, by inadvertence, taken place. The subject of religious instruction has been placed, by the Legislature of the Commonwealth, where public sentiment, and the necessity of the case, would place it and keep it, even without legislation. In a community, where the utmost liberty of religious profession exists, where it is the dearest birthright of every man, that he may worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, any attempt to make the public schools, (supported, as they are, by the common expense for the common benefit,) an instrument for advancing or depressing the opinions of any sect of Christians, would meet what it would merit, the prompt rebuke of every considerate citizen. Although it may not be easy, theoretically, to draw the line between those

views of religious truth and of Christian faith, which are common to all, and may, therefore, with propriety be inculcated in school, and those which, being peculiar to individual sects, are, therefore, by law excluded ; still it is believed, that no practical difficulty occurs in the conduct of our schools, in this respect. It is the general sentiment of the people of all denominations, that religious instruction shall be left to parents at the fireside, and to the religious teachers, to whose ministrations parents and guardians may choose to confide their own spiritual guidance, and that of those dependent on them. The Legislature, therefore, has but acted in accordance with the sense of the community, in prescribing that no books shall be directed by school committees, to be purchased, or used, in any of the town schools, "which are calculated to favor the tenets of any particular sect of Christians."

Although the School Library, whose publication has been sanctioned by the Board, does not consist of school books, or books to be used in schools, it has still been considered, that the spirit of the law applies equally to the books to be purchased for school libraries, and this principle has governed the Board, in giving their recommendation. They have not supposed, that books for religious instruction (strictly so called) were in the contemplation of the Legislature, in authorizing the formation of school libraries, but works of useful knowledge and general science ; not excluding, however, those, in which scientific research is made subservient to the establishment and illustration of moral and religious truth. But, if in this they have mistaken the design of the Legislature ; if theological works were within the purview of the law authorizing the formation of district libraries ; and if the restriction on school books, just alluded to, is inapplicable to the library books ; it will be in the power of school committees, that desire it, to obtain books of that description for the school libraries. The Board of Education attempts no interference with this course, however strong their opinion of its inexpediency and illegality.

With these explanations, the attention of the Legislature, of the friends of education, and the public generally, is invited to the volumes already published, which may serve as a fair specimen of the whole. It will be seen, that they are recommended, in the first place, by great neatness of execution, and by being afforded at a price, which, considering the style of the typography, must be considered very reasonable. The Board attach some importance to these circumstances, believing that the formation of a taste for reading, in the community, depends, to a considerable degree, on a supply of books, at a moderate price, which are correctly printed, and can be read with ease. Could the distaste for books, sometimes manifested by young persons whose character is not formed, be traced to its source, it might, no doubt, in many cases, be found in the repulsive exterior, obscure type, unsightly paper, and incorrect printing, of the few books within their reach. The books recommended by the Board, without any pretensions to typographical luxury, are free from all these objections.

With respect to the more important point, of the subjects of the books, it is believed, they are, without exception, such as a Christian parent would approve. It has not been possible to proceed on a systematic plan, in giving, in the first ten volumes, a proportionate share to every branch of knowledge. Still, there will be found to be a due degree of variety in their contents. The Natural Theology of Paley, with the illustrations and supplements of Sir Charles Bell and Lord Brougham, and the notes of Dr. Elisha Bartlett, by whom the present edition is prepared, is contained in two of the volumes. Nothing need be said in commendation of this great work, in which the fundamental truths of natural religion are placed on a basis which can never be shaken, and set forth with a beauty and variety of illustration never surpassed. An abridgment of Mr. Irving's Life of Columbus has been prepared for this Series, by its distinguished author, and is contained in another

of the volumes already published. Three volumes, selected from Sparks's Library of American Biography, contain the lives of many of the most distinguished statesmen and heroes of our country. Four volumes of the Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons, by Dr. Henry Duncan, of Scotland, have been prepared for the School Library, by the Rev. Dr. Greenwood ; and will be found to contain the most interesting and instructive views of almost all the phenomena of the natural world.

For a fuller exposition of the views of the Board, as to the importance of this attempt to promote the formation of School Libraries, and of the principles on which their sanction has been given to the works published, reference is respectfully made to the Introductory Essay, prepared by a member of the Board, and prefixed to the first volume. They will only here ask leave to remark, that, while they confidently believe that the volumes which have been and may be published, under their sanction, will be found of a pure and salutary moral tendency, well adapted to feed and strengthen the appetite for useful knowledge, and entirely free from every thing which could corrupt or mislead the youthful mind ; they do not desire, as individuals, to be considered responsible for every opinion, or shade of opinion, that may be expressed in the volumes. It would not be possible for any person, or any number of persons, in any capacity, to select a library of books for family or school use, of which every volume, in every sentence, should faithfully reflect the precise opinions of the individual or individuals making the selection.

The Board beg leave, in this connection, to submit to the Legislature the expediency, in order to the further encouragement of the formation of School Libraries, of allowing to the several school districts, out of the income of the School Fund, a sum equal to that which may be appropriated by the district, not exceeding ten dollars per annum to any district, the whole to be expended at the discretion of the school committee. A similar measure has been adopted, it is understood, in New York, and with the best effect.

It is a part of the duty of the Board, prescribed by law, to prepare and lay before the Legislature, in a printed form, on or before the second Wednesday in January, annually, an abstract of the School Returns received by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. This duty has, according to law, been laboriously and faithfully performed, in the office of the Secretary of State, under the superintendence of the Secretary of the Board.*

The attention of the Legislature is particularly invited to this abstract. In addition to the usual statistical facts, which are required by law to be embraced in the returns, extracts from the reports of the school committees will be found, in many cases, appended to the digest of the returns of the several towns. These extracts have been taken, with great labor, by the Secretary of the Board, from the copies of the reports of the school committees, required by law to be transmitted, with the returns, to the office of the Secretary of State. It is believed that these extracts will give a considerably increased interest and value to the annual abstract of the returns. They present the views of the school committees of the Commonwealth, on the subject of education in their several towns, the condition of their schools, and the measures deemed advisable or practicable by the committees, for their improvement. These reports of the school committees are entitled to the highest respect, inasmuch as they are the utterance of the voice of the people, on the all-important subject of the education of their children, expressed through the organs of their own immediate choice. It will appear, conclusively, from the extracts given from these reports, that the recent legislation of the Commonwealth, having for its object the improvement of the Com-

*The greater part of the work, mentioned in the Report of the Secretary of State of the 1st January, 1840, as being done in his office, for the Board of Education, was performed in the preparation of the statistical tables of the Abstract of the School Returns, under the law of 13th April, 1838.

mon Schools ; the measures adopted by the Board, under the sanction, or by the direction, of the General Court, to carry that legislation into effect ; and the general suggestions, which have proceeded from the Board, on the subject of the schools, and the improvements desirable or practicable in their condition ; are fully sustained by the school committees of the Commonwealth, as far as can be judged from the reports, of which copies have been transmitted to the office of the Secretary of State. Believing the citizens, who faithfully perform the duties of school-committee men, to be benefactors of the public, in the highest sense of the word, the Board cannot but express their own feeling of obligation to that portion of them, whose reports they have had the opportunity of consulting. The views and opinions contained in them are submitted to the Legislature, with full confidence that they will receive respectful consideration, and be found to give a value to the annual abstract, which it has not possessed in any former year.

During the past year, a semi-monthly journal, expressly devoted to the subject of education, entitled 'The Common School Journal,' has been published, under the editorship of the Secretary of the Board. Twenty-four numbers of this journal have appeared. The Board have no official connection with this publication ; but they beg leave to express the opinion, that it will be found a valuable repository of documents on the subject of education, and an important auxiliary to the efforts made for its improvement.

For the discussion of other topics, connected with this subject, and, particularly, that of the existing supply of books in the community, the Board would refer to the report of their Secretary, which is herewith submitted. In conclusion, they would invoke the continued attention of the Legislature to the great interests of that Common School education, which, as far as human means go, is the foundation of our prosperity as a people. It is not intended to utter any sentiment unfriendly to our higher seminaries of education. They, too, are the creation of the people, early called into being, to supply the demands of the public service in the various relations of life ; and they have been steadily countenanced, and liberally endowed, in all periods of our history. By the Constitution of the State, it is made the duty of "Legislatures and Magistrates, in all future periods of the Commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them ; especially the University of Cambridge," (the only collegiate institution then in existence,) "public schools, and grammar schools in the towns." But, without instituting any invidious comparison between the different classes of institutions for education ; and firmly believing, that the colleges and schools are the best friends of each other, and prosper most where they prosper together ; the Board would still respectfully submit the opinion, that the improvement of the Common Schools is emphatically, and, in the first instance, the concern of the people. They are intended for the children of the whole community, while, comparatively, a small number receive a college education. The elementary school must be placed at the door of the individual citizen, or, at least, in the centre of the village, or many of those for whom it is intended, will fail to enjoy its benefits. While it is also desirable, that the means of a collegiate education should be as widely diffused as is possible, without lowering its standard, it must, of necessity, in almost all cases, be sought at some distance from home, and, if not found in one place, it may be obtained at another. For this reason, the state of the higher seminaries of learning does not, of necessity, determine the character of a community, even in reference to those branches of education for which they are provided. Not so with the Common Schools. Their condition is an infallible index of that of the community. Never was there a prosperous, virtuous, intelligent people, where the schools were in a languishing condition. They furnish the keys of knowledge to the mass of the people. They are the only avenue, by which the majority of the rising generation are able, as they grow up, to make

their way into life, prepared to discharge its duties, and fulfil its relations, with ease and credit to themselves, and with advantage to society.

The Board rejoice in the conviction, that this is a cause, which makes no appeal to sectarian or party feeling. It has hitherto proved a neutral ground, amidst all the collisions of judgment on other subjects. It appears to have been instinctively felt, by all good citizens, that the Common School system required their united support, and that, if once drawn into the vortex of party, it must sink. It has been the earnest endeavor of the Board to act, in all respects, in accordance with this principle ; and they have the satisfaction to state, that, as far as their agency and means of observation extend, it exists and operates on the minds of the people, with unimpaired vigor.

It has also been to them a source of satisfaction, to observe the interest manifested in several of our sister States, and in foreign countries, in the efforts which have been made, of late years, in this Commonwealth, to raise the standard of popular education. While Massachusetts has followed the example of New York and Connecticut, in the establishment of a school fund ; her own educational legislation and measures, particularly those relating to Normal schools, are watched, with anxiety, in many of the other States. It has always been the boast of our ancient Commonwealth, that the education of the young has been an object of peculiar care ; and, if she would sustain her enviable reputation in this respect, she must permit no relaxation of the zeal which has hitherto animated her. The cause of education is eminently the cause of the age ; and the impression is gaining strength, both in Europe and in this country, that it is only by raising the standard of education, that the social, political, and moral, condition of the people can be improved.

But all measures, designed to promote education, must depend, for their success in this country, on the hearty coöperation of public opinion. It is only by enlightening and concentrating that opinion, that powerful effects can be produced. This is most effectually to be done, by persevering appeals to the understanding of the people, by placing the subject in every proper form of arrangement and persuasion, before the public mind, and by giving publicity to the facts, which prove the defects in the system, as existing in some portions of the Commonwealth, and the great excellence to which it is brought in other portions ; thus encouraging a generous emulation, where nothing but good can result from the effort to excel. In the growing attention already bestowed on the subject, the Board behold the assurance of much good actually accomplished, and an encouragement, under the direction of the Legislature, to an increased zeal in the discharge of their duties.

EDWARD EVERETT,
GEORGE HULL,
EDMUND DWIGHT,
GEORGE PUTNAM,
ROBERT RANTOUL, JR.,
THOMAS ROBBINS,
JARED SPARKS,
CHARLES HUDSON,
GEORGE N. BRIGGS,
W. G. BATES.

Boston, 27th December, 1839.

The annexed advertisement of the Publishers of the School Library is subjoined, in an abridged form. It contains the list of the books published, and of those in preparation.

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY.

MARSH, CAPEN, LYON, AND WEBB,

109, WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON,

Are now publishing, under the sanction of the Massachusetts Board of Education, a collection of original and selected works, entitled, 'THE SCHOOL LIBRARY.'

The LIBRARY will embrace two series, of fifty volumes each ; the one to be in 18mo., averaging from 250 to 280 pages per volume ; the other in 12 mo., each volume containing from 350 to 400 pages. The former, or *Juvenile Series*, is intended for children of ten or twelve years of age, and *under* ; the latter for individuals of that age, and *upwards*,—in other words, for advanced scholars and their parents.

The LIBRARY is to consist of *reading*, and not *school, class, or text*, books ; the design being to furnish youth with suitable works for perusal during their leisure hours ; works that will interest, as well as instruct them, and of such a character, that they will turn to them with pleasure, when it is desirable to unbend from the studies of the schoolroom.

The plan will embrace every department of Science and Literature, preference being given to works relating to our own country, and illustrative of the history, institutions, manners, customs, &c., of our own people. Being intended for the *whole* community, no work of a sectarian or denominational character in religion, or of a partisan character in politics, will be admitted.

The aim will be to clothe the subjects discussed, in a popular garb, that they may prove so attractive, as to lure the child onwards, fix his attention, and induce him, subsequently, to seek information from other and more recondite works, which, if put into his hands at the onset, would alarm him, and induce a disgust for that which would appear dry and unintelligible, and, of course, uninteresting.

The intention is not to provide information for any one class, to the exclusion of others, but to disseminate knowledge among all classes. The Publishers wish the children of the Farmer, the Merchant, the Manufacturer, the Mechanic, the Laborer,—all to profit by the lights of science and literature, that they may be rendered the more virtuous and happy, and become more useful to themselves, to one another, to the community, and mankind at large. To accomplish this desirable end, the LIBRARY will embrace so wide a range of subjects, that every child *may find something* which will prove useful and profitable to him, whatever his situation, circumstances, or pursuits, in afterlife, may be.

The project is one of great extent, and vast importance ; and, if properly carried out, must become of inestimable value to the young. Whether the anticipations of the Publishers, with regard to it, will be verified, time must determine ; but, from the intellectual and moral, theoretical and practical,

character of those who have engaged to aid in the undertaking, they have good grounds for presuming that much will be accomplished, and that, by their united efforts, many obstacles, now existing to the mental, moral, and physical, improvement of youth, will be removed, or, at least, be rendered more easily surmountable.

Among the individuals already engaged as writers for one or both Series, may be mentioned,—the Hon. Judge Story, Jared Sparks, Esq., Washington Irving, Esq., Rev. Dr. Wayland, Professor Benjamin Silliman, Professor Denison Olmsted, Professor Alonzo Potter, D. D., Hon. Judge Buel, Jacob Bigelow, M. D., Elisha Bartlett, M. D., Rev. Charles W. Upham, Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, D. D., Rev. Royal Robbins, Rev. Warren Burton, Charles T. Jackson, M. D., N. Hawthorne, Esq., Robert Rantoul, Jr., Esq., Professor Tucker, Professor Elton, Professor Francis Lieber, Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, D. D., Professor Joseph Alden, D. D., Professor B. B. Edwards, Hon. Alexander H. Everett, Hon. Isaac Hill, Hon. James M. Porter.

Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, Mrs. E. F. Ellet, Mrs. Emma C. Embury, Mrs. A. H. Lincoln Phelps, Mrs. H. E. B. Stowe, Miss E. Robbins, Miss E. P. Peabody, Miss Mary E. Lee, Miss C. M. Sedgwick.

No work will be admitted into the LIBRARY, unless it be approved by every member of the Board of Education ; which Board consists of the following individuals, viz., His Excellency Edward Everett, Chairman, His Honor George Hull, Edmund Dwight, Esq., Rev. George Putnam, Robert Rantoul, Jr., Esq., Rev. Thomas Robbins, D. D., Jared Sparks, Esq., Hon. Charles Hudson, Hon. George N. Briggs, and William G. Bates, Esq.

The following works have been printed, and constitute the first ten volumes of the 12mo. series, viz.

LIFE OF COLUMBUS, by WASHINGTON IRVING, a new edition, (revised by the author,) including a Visit to Palos, and other additions, a portrait of the Great Navigator, a Map, and several illustrative engravings.

PALEY'S NATURAL THEOLOGY, in two volumes, with selections from the Dissertations and Notes of LORD BROUGHAM and SIR CHARLES BELL, illustrated by numerous wood cuts, and prefaced by a Life of the Author ; (with a portrait ;) the whole being newly arranged, and adapted for the School Library, by ELISHA BARTLETT, M. D., *Professor of the Theory and Practice of Physic and Pathological Anatomy in Dartmouth College.*

LIVES OF EMINENT INDIVIDUALS, CELEBRATED IN AMERICAN HISTORY, in three vols., with portraits of Robert Fulton, Sebastian Cabot, and Sir Henry Vane, and autographs of most of the individuals.

VOL. I. CONTAINS

Life of MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN STARK, by His Excellency Edward Everett.

“ DAVID BRAINERD, by Rev. William B. O. Peabody.

“ ROBERT FULTON, by James Renwick, LL. D., *Professor of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry, in Columbia College, New York city.*

“ CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH, by George S. Hillard, Esq.

VOL. II. CONTAINS

Life of MAJOR-GENERAL ETHAN ALLEN, by Jared Sparks, *Professor of History in Harvard University.*

“ SEBASTIAN CABOT, by Charles Hayward, Jr., Esq.

“ HENRY HUDSON, by Henry R. Cleaveland, Esq.

“ MAJOR-GENERAL JOSEPH WARREN, by Alexander H. Everett, LL. D.

“ MAJOR-GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM, by O. W. B. Peabody, Esq.

“ DAVID RITTENHOUSE, by Professor James Renwick, LL. D.

VOL. III. CONTAINS

Life of WILLIAM PINKNEY, by Henry Wheaton, LL. D., *Author of History of the Northmen.*

Life of SIR HENRY VANE, by Rev. Charles W. Upham.

“ MAJOR-GENERAL ANTHONY WAYNE, by John Armstrong, Esq.

“ WILLIAM ELLERY, by Edward T. Channing, Esq.

“ MAJOR-GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY, by John Armstrong, Esq.

THE SACRED PHILOSOPHY OF THE SEASONS, illustrating the Perfections of God in the Phenomena of the Year. In 4 vols. By the Rev. HENRY DUNCAN, D. D., of *Ruthwell, Scotland*; with important additions, and some modifications, to adapt it to American readers, by the Rev. F. W. P. GREENWOOD, D. D., of Boston.

The preceding ten volumes are now ready for delivery;—and they will be followed, with all due despatch, by the subjoined, among others, provided they are approved by the Board of Education.

LIFE OF WASHINGTON, (with a portrait, and numerous engravings,) in two vols., by the Rev. CHARLES W. UPHAM, *Author of ‘the Life of Sir Henry Vane.’*

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE UNDER DIFFICULTIES; in two volumes, with Preface and Notes, by FRANCIS WAYLAND, D. D., *President of Brown University.*

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE UNDER DIFFICULTIES, illustrated by Incidents in the Lives of AMERICAN INDIVIDUALS; in one volume, with Portraits.

HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY, in two volumes, with illustrative wood cuts.

CHEMISTRY, with illustrative wood cuts, by BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, M. D., LL. D., *Professor of Chemistry, Mineralogy, &c., in Yale College.*

ASTRONOMY, by DENISON OLMSTED, *Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy, in Yale College.*

This work will be a popular treatise on the Science; it will also enter fully into its history, and consider the subject of Natural Theology, so far as it is related to Astronomy.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, by PROFESSOR OLMSTED.

Both of these works will be very fully illustrated by diagrams and wood engravings.

THE USEFUL ARTS, considered in connection with the Applications of Science; in two volumes, with many illustrative engravings and wood cuts, by JACOB BIGELOW, M. D., *Professor of Materia Medica in Harvard University, Author of ‘the Elements of Technology,’ &c. &c.*

A FAMILIAR EXPOSITION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES; containing a Brief Commentary on every clause, explaining the true nature, reasons, and objects thereof; designed for the use of school libraries, and general readers. By the Hon. JUDGE STORY, LL. D., *Dane Professor of Law in Harvard University, Author of ‘Commentaries on the Constitution,’ &c.*

LIFE OF DR. FRANKLIN.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF FRANKLIN, by JARED SPARKS, LL. D., *Professor of History in Harvard University, Author of ‘the Life and Writings of Washington,’ ‘the Life and Writings of Franklin,’ &c. &c.*

CHRISTIANITY AND KNOWLEDGE, by the Rev. ROYAL ROBBINS.

The design of this Work is to show what Christianity has done for the human intellect, and what that has done for Christianity.

THE LORD OF THE SOIL, OR, PICTURES OF AGRICULTURAL LIFE, by Rev. WARREN BURTON, *Author of ‘The District School as it was,’ &c. &c.*

SCIENCE AND THE ARTS, by the Rev. ALONZO POTTER, D. D.,

Professor of Moral Philosophy and Rhetoric, in Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.

The design of this Work is to call attention to the fact, that the Arts are the result of *intelligence*,—that they have, each one its *principles or theory*,—that these principles are furnished by *Science*, and that he, therefore, who would understand the Arts, must know something of *Science*; while, on the other hand, he who would see the true power and worth of *Science* ought to study it in its applications. The work will be made up of *facts*, illustrating and enforcing these views,—so arranged as to exhibit the invariable connection between *processes in Art*, and *laws in Nature*. The importance of such a work requires no comment.

THE FARMER'S COMPANION, OR, ESSAYS ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF AMERICAN HUSBANDRY, by the Hon. JESSE BUEL, *Conductor of 'the Cultivator,' Albany, N. Y.*

This Work is intended as an aid to the *Young Farmer*. The following, among other subjects, are treated of, viz.

1. The Importance of Agriculture to a Nation.
2. Improvement in our Agriculture practicable and necessary.
3. Some of the Principles of the New and Improved Husbandry.
4. Agriculture considered as an Employment.
5. Earths and Soils.
6. Improvement of the Soil.
7. Analogy between Animal and Vegetable Nutrition.
8. Further Improvement of the Soil.
9. " " by Manures, Animal and Vegetable.
10. " " by Mineral Manures.
11. Principles and Operations of Draining.
12. Principles of Tillage.
13. Operations of Tillage, &c. &c.
14. Alternation of Crops.
15. Root Culture.
16. On substituting Fallow Crops for Naked Fallows.
17. On the Adaptation of particular Crops to certain Soils.
18. Effects of Cropping and Manuring.
19. Rules and Suggestions in Farming.
20. On the Improvement of Grass Lands.
21. On the Cultivation of Grasses.
22. The Atmosphere, and its Uses to the Husbandman.
23. On the Germination of Seeds.
24. On Stall-feeding.
25. The Economy of cutting up Corn.
26. On Rural Embellishment.

Address prepared to be delivered before the Agricultural and Horticultural Societies of New Haven county, Conn.

Appendix; containing a Collection of Facts and Tables valuable to the Farmer.

Glossaries of Agricultural and Chemical Terms.

The work contains numerous Cuts, illustrative of the various operations spoken of and recommended.

GEOLOGY AND MINERALOGY, by CHARLES T. JACKSON, M. D., *Geological Surveyor of Maine and Rhode Island.*

STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES, by GEORGE TUCKER, *Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Virginia, Author of 'the Life of Jefferson,' &c. &c.*

AMERICAN TREES AND PLANTS used for medicinal and economical purposes, and employed in the Arts, with numerous engravings; by Professor JACOB BIGELOW, *Author of 'Plants of Boston,' 'Medical Botany,' &c. &c.*

MORAL EFFECTS OF INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, by ROBERT RANTOUL, Jr., Esq.

LIVES OF THE REFORMERS, by Rev. ROMEO ELTON, *Professor of Languages in Brown University.*

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF DISTINGUISHED FEMALES, by Mrs. EMMA C. EMBURY, of *Brooklyn, N. Y.*

HISTORY OF EDUCATION, both Ancient and Modern, by CALVIN E. STOWE, D. D., *Professor of Biblical Literature in Lane Seminary, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

DO RIGHT AND HAVE RIGHT, by Mrs. ALMIRA H. LINCOLN PHELPS, *Principal of the Literary Department of the Young Ladies' Seminary, at West Chester, Pa., formerly of the Troy Seminary, N. Y., Author of 'Familiar Lectures on Botany,' 'Female Student,' &c.*

The object of this Work may be gathered from the following remarks of Mrs. Phelps. "A popular work on the principles of law, with stories illustrating these principles, might be very profitable to people in common life, as well as to children. The *ward* cheated by a guardian, the *widow* imposed on by administrators or executors, the *wife* abandoned by a husband, with whom she had trusted her paternal inheritance, the *partner* in business, overreached by his crafty associate, for want of a knowledge of the operations of the law,—all these might be exhibited in such a way, as to teach the necessity of legal knowledge to both sexes, and to all ages and classes."

THE FIRESIDE FRIEND, OR, FEMALE STUDENT; being Advice to Young Ladies on the important subjects of Education; by Mrs. A. H. L. PHELPS.

The Publishers have also in preparation for this Series, a History of the United States, and of other Countries, a History of the Aborigines of our Country, a History of Inventions, Works on Botany, Natural History, &c. &c. Many distinguished writers, not here mentioned, have been engaged, whose names will be in due time announced, although, at present, we do not feel at liberty to make them public.

The following constitute the first seven volumes of the *Juvenile Series*, viz.

PICTURES OF EARLY LIFE, or Sketches of Youth; by Mrs. EMMA C. EMBURY, of *Brooklyn, N. Y.*

PLEASURES OF TASTE, AND OTHER STORIES, selected from the Writings of JANE TAYLOR, with a sketch of her life, (and a likeness,) by Mrs. S. J. HALE.

MEANS AND ENDS, OR SELF TRAINING, by Miss CATHERINE M. SEDGWICK, *Author of 'The Poor Rich Man, and Rich Poor Man,' 'Live and Let Live,' 'Home,' &c. &c.*

THE JUVENILE BUDGET OPENED; being Selections from the Writings of DR. JOHN AIKEN, with a Sketch of his Life, by Mrs. S. J. HALE.

HISTORICAL TALES, blending instruction with amusement; by Miss MARY E. LEE, of *Charleston, S. C.*

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF MRS. BARBAULD, with a Sketch of her Life.

SCENES IN NATURE, OR, CONVERSATIONS ON LAND AND WATER.

Among the works in the course of preparation, for the smaller Series, are the following, viz.

CONVERSATIONS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY, by Prof. J. ALDEN, of *Williams College.*

NEW-ENGLAND HISTORICAL SKETCHES, by N. HAWTHORNE, *Author of 'Twice Told Tales,' &c.*

CONVERSATIONS AND STORIES BY THE FIRESIDE, by Mrs. SARAH J. HALE.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF MRS. SHERWOOD, with a Life and Portrait.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF MARIA EDGEWORTH, with a Life and Portrait.

CHEMISTRY FOR BEGINNERS, by BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, JR., *Assistant in the Department of Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Geology, in Yale College*, aided by Professor SILLIMAN.

FREDERICK HASKELL'S VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD, by H. G. HALE, A. M., *Philologist to the Exploring Expedition*.

BIOGRAPHY FOR THE YOUNG, by Miss E. ROBBINS, *Author of 'American Popular Lessons,' 'Sequel' to the same, &c.*

THE WONDERS OF NATURE ; illustrated by numerous Cuts.

WORKS OF ART ; illustrated by numerous Cuts.

COUNTRY RAMBLES ; by Mrs. E. F. ELLET, *of Columbia, S. C.*

MY SCHOOLS AND MY TEACHERS, by Mrs. A. H. L. PHELPS.

The author's design, in this work, is to describe the Common Schools as they were in New England at the beginning of the present century ; to delineate the peculiar characters of different Teachers ; and to give a sketch of her various school companions, with their progress in afterlife, endeavoring thereby to show that the child, while at school, is forming the future man, or woman.

It is not the intention of the Publishers to drive these works through the Press with an undue speed, in the hope of securing the market, by the multiplicity of the publications cast upon the community ; they rely for patronage, upon the intrinsic merits of the works, and, consequently, time must be allowed the writers to mature and systematize them. The more surely to admit of this, the two Series will be issued in sets of five and ten volumes at a time. Besides the advantage above alluded to, that will result from such an arrangement, it will place the SCHOOL LIBRARY within the reach of those Districts, which, from the limited amount of their annual funds, would not otherwise be enabled to procure it.

The works will be printed on paper and with type expressly manufactured for the Library ; will be bound in cloth, with leather backs and corners, having gilt titles upon the backs, and, for greater durability, cloth hinges inside of the covers.

The *larger Series* will be furnished to Schools, Academies, &c., at *seventy five cents* per volume, and the *Juvenile Series* at *forty cents* per volume ; which the Publishers advisedly declare to be cheaper, than any other series of works that can be procured at home or abroad, bearing in mind their high intellectual character, and the style of their mechanical execution.

The Publishers solicit orders from School Committees, Trustees, Teachers, and others, for either or both Series, and wish particular directions, *how, to whom, and to what place*, the books shall be forwarded.

THIRD

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Massachusetts.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

TOGETHER WITH THE

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

Boston:
DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS.
.....
1840.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, Jan. 31, 1840.

Ordered, That the report of the Board of Education, be read to the House; and referred, together with the reports of their Secretary and Treasurer, to the Committee on Education, with instructions to cause four thousand copies of the same to be printed.

L. S. CUSHING, Clerk.

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The Board of Education, in obedience to the law of the 20th April, 1837, beg leave to submit to the Legislature their Third Annual Report.

The conventions directed by law to be attended by the Secretary of the Board in each county of the Commonwealth, have been duly held. The presence of Teachers, of the members of School Committees, and of the friends of education, generally, at these meetings, is, of course, voluntary, and must, therefore, vary with circumstances. At several of the conventions, there has been a gratifying attendance. Discussions on important subjects connected with education, have been had at these meetings. Among the most prominent subjects considered, have been the education of children in factories ; and the supply of books well adapted for the wants of the people, generally, and especially of the young. These discussions have, in many cases, been sustained in a manner, which evinces deep interest in the subjects considered. At the several county conventions, addresses were delivered by the Secretary of the Board, on the *necessity* of education, as a prepara-

tion for all the great personal and social duties. It is believed that, by the various exercises at these meetings, an increase of zeal has been produced, in that part of the community, to which we must most directly look for the improvement of our Schools.

The influence proceeding from these conventions, is regarded as one of the most important instruments, which can be employed, for raising the standard of Common School Education. The great majority of the people unquestionably entertain proper feelings on the subject. They prize education as they ought, and wish their children to enjoy its advantages. Where the condition of the Schools is bad, and manifestly inadequate to the due preparation of the young, for the duties of life, (as far as that preparation is to be acquired at places of education), it may be presumed to result, in most cases, from ignorance of what has been accomplished in other parts of the Commonwealth, and might be effected in all, by proper exertions on the part of those, to whom this important trust is confided by law. Inasmuch as zeal on this subject is almost sure to follow in the train of intelligence, the Board know of no agency which can more safely be relied upon to awaken and sustain the proper interest, than public meetings in every part of the Commonwealth, at which the friends and conductors of education may have the opportunity of communicating to each other and the public, the results of their experience and observations. Such assemblies are entirely in accordance with the character of our political institutions, which aim to effect the great objects of human society, as far as possible, by the voluntary action of the people; and which look to the government only, for such measure of aid and organization, as is needed to

call into the highest action the enlightened sense of the community. It is confidently believed, that the manner in which the county conventions have been attended, the character of the addresses, discussions, and proceedings, and the influences they have been calculated to exercise, are such and such only as were desired and intended by the Legislature, in passing the law which makes it the duty of the Secretary to be present. No sectarian or party interest, has, in any single case, been manifested ; and those attending the meetings have come together as on ground common to every good citizen. It may be regarded as by no means one of the least beneficial results of holding these conventions, that they unite in an object of permanent and sacred interest, all those who, however alienated from each other in reference to other topics of public concernment, take a lively and a common interest in the welfare of the rising generation.

In the course of the past year, the Normal schools or seminaries for the qualification of teachers, at Lexington and Barre, have gone into operation. The board refer to their last annual report for the detail of the steps taken, in the location of these institutions. As it was very important to secure the highest attainable degree of qualification, in the immediate superintendence of these schools, much time was unavoidably required for the selection and appointment of instructors. The arrangements for the school at Lexington, were first completed, by the choice of Mr. Cyrus Pierce, who, at the time of his election, was engaged with uncommon success, as principal of the public school at Nantucket. The Normal school at Lexington, it will be recollected, was exclusively designed for females, and as it went into

operation at a season of the year, (the month of July,) when female teachers are generally under engagement in schools, the attendance the first term was not large. This circumstance, however, was the less to be regretted, as it enabled the principal of the school to proceed in its organization, with the caution desirable in an institution of a novel character in this country. After a vacation of two weeks the second term commenced about the middle of October, with a considerably increased attendance. The present number of pupils is twenty-one. At the same time, a model school connected with the institution, was put into operation. This is a school attended by thirty pupils of both sexes, between the ages of six and ten years, gathered from the several school districts in the town. This school is under the general superintendence of the principal of the Normal school but is taught by the pupils of that institution. It is visited every day by the principal as a listener and observer, and occasion for remark is taken on the manner in which the duty of instruction is performed by the pupils of the Normal school. Occasionally the principal instructs the model school in the presence of all the pupils of the Normal school, who consequently have the benefit of his example. The establishment of the model school is understood to have been very favorably viewed by the community, and a much larger number of children could have been obtained for it, had it been practicable to receive more to advantage.

The Normal school, at Barre, went into operation on the 4th of September, under the superintendence of Mr. S. P. Newman, who had for many years filled with reputation the office of a professor in Bowdoin college, in the state of Maine. The school at Barre, for reasons

intimated in the last annual report, was opened for males and females, and thirty-nine pupils attended during the term. The resort was so great, that it was found necessary to employ an assistant teacher ; but as the schools kept for females are generally opened in the spring, and as the larger part of the pupils are of that sex, it is presumed that a reduction of numbers will take place at the third term.

It is supposed that a main cause, why the resort of pupils at Barre has been greater than at Lexington, is to be found in the circumstances, that both sexes have been admitted at Barre, and females only at Lexington ; and that pupils have been received for a single term at the former place and not at the latter. The course pursued on the first point, as was explained in the Report of the Board the last year, has been in conformity with what was understood to be the public preference in the two places. The same reason existed for permitting a shorter term at Barre, united with a wish to ascertain, by the practical operation of the two plans, which will be entitled to preference as the permanent rule. The Board is strongly inclined to the opinion, that a year at least should be passed at the Normal schools by each pupil ; but it may be found on trial, that the advantages of a shorter term are sufficient to outweigh the obvious objections to it. A model school has not yet been organized at Barre ; but it is proposed to connect one with the Normal school, as soon as the requisite arrangements, for that purpose, can be effected.

The Board express themselves with entire approbation of the Institutions at Lexington and Barre, with respect both to the fidelity with which instruction has been dispensed, and the disposition and capacity of the greater

portion of the pupils. They feel that a degree of success of the most gratifying character has been realized, in both institutions. At an expense to the Commonwealth of less than \$1,000, for the past year, two seminaries for the qualification of teachers have been organized in commodious buildings,—with adequate libraries, and apparatus,—and under the superintendence of experienced and distinguished instructors. The combination of circumstances which has produced so desirable a result, by the application of so moderate a sum from the treasury, must be considered as an event peculiarly auspicious to the cause of education.

The instructions given in the Normal schools have, under the regulations adopted by the Board, been directed to the two great objects of an institution for the qualification of teachers, viz. 1st, to impart to the pupils a more correct and thorough knowledge of the various branches required by law to be taught in our schools, and 2d, to teach the principles of communicating instruction, both in theory, and in practice at a model school to be connected with the main institution.

The importance of these two branches of instruction, and their connexion with each other, in a seminary for the qualification of teachers, is too obvious to require an elaborate explanation. Few persons, who have been called to the performance of the duty of a member of a school committee, can have failed to observe, that of those who offer themselves as teachers, a large number are destitute of an accurate and thorough acquaintance with the various branches of knowledge, required by law to be taught in the schools. They neither read nor write well ;—are deficient in the science of numbers ;—and have an imperfect knowledge of the grammar of our

language ;—but they have a foundation in all these branches. It is not to be expected, that a majority of the district school teachers in the State can afford the time for a very long and thorough revision of the branches of knowledge, which they are required to teach. But it is nevertheless true, that much may be learned, even in a short time, passed with that particular object in view, in an institution expressly devoted to that object, and at an age when the mind has attained some maturity, and the moral motives to diligence are powerfully felt. There can be no doubt, it is believed, in the mind of any person practically acquainted with the subject, that if, of two persons of equal capacity, possessing beforehand the usual average proficiency in the branches to be taught, one should immediately take charge of a school, without any previous preparation, and the other should devote even so short a period as three months to a diligent review of all those branches,—a review to be made under the direction and with the aid of an accomplished and faithful instructor,—the advantage would be greatly on the side of the last, in commencing his duties as a teacher.

But the art of instruction, that is of communicating knowledge to the youthful mind and aiding and encouraging its own efforts ; the art of governing a school, or rather of so forming and influencing it, as to supersede the necessity of that mixture of harsh discipline and capricious indulgence which is called government, is also one of great difficulty and importance. It has its principles, which lie deep in the philosophy of our nature. Some of the best talent in several countries, for the last generation, has been employed in elucidating these principles. To comprehend them thoroughly, and

with the ability to apply them practically, is the endowment of a gifted few. A thoroughly accomplished teacher is as rarely to be met with, as an individual of the highest merit in any of the professions, or other most responsible callings in life. If these considerations in one view of the subject should lead us to despair of furnishing many of our schools with teachers of this description, they should lead us directly to the conclusion, that for the practice of such an art some specific preparation is far better than none. The preparation may be inadequate, but nothing is so bad as wholly to want preparation. Of two individuals, otherwise equally well qualified, and proposing to engage in the business of teaching school, if one should enter upon his duties, without any special instruction in them, and no guide but his own judgment, and the recollections of his own experience at school, (possibly an indifferent school,) while the other should pass even so short a period as three months in an institution exclusively for the qualification of teachers, where he should be carefully instructed in the principles of teaching and governing a school, can there be a doubt that the latter would be in a condition to give by far the greatest aid and encouragement to his pupils?

These strong and obvious considerations have, in other countries, led to the adoption of Normal schools, as a part of the regular system of public instruction, and it would seem that they are as decisive of the question of the utility of such institutions in America as in Europe. They are the considerations, it is presumed, which led the Legislature promptly to engage in the experiment now in progress, and on which the attention of the friends of education throughout the country is anxiously

fixed. The board ask permission, in closing this part of their report, to quote the words of one of the most distinguished philosophers of the age, on this subject. "We need an institution for the formation of better teachers ; and until this step is taken, we can make no important progress. The most crying want in this Commonwealth is the want of accomplished teachers. We boast of our schools ; but our schools do comparatively little for want of educated instructors. Without good teaching a school is but a name. An institution for training men to train the young, would be a fountain of living waters, sending forth streams to refresh present and future ages." *

Great interest has been evinced in the establishment of a Normal school in Plymouth county. As premises furnishing adequate accommodation were not to be obtained in a convenient situation, it was deemed advisable by those desirous of effecting the object to raise a fund of ten thousand dollars for that purpose. The contributions toward this fund have been completed ; but difficulties have arisen as to the location of the school. This point has been referred to disinterested persons not resident in the county. The efforts made to secure the establishment of this institution have been of the most praiseworthy character, and a zeal never before witnessed in the cause of education, has been awakened in most of the towns in Plymouth county.

The last Annual Report contains a statement of the steps taken by the Board, to give effect to the act of the 12th of April, 1837, by which the school districts of the Commonwealth were authorized to form school libraries,

* Rev. Dr. Channing.

by a small annual appropriation for the purchase of books. In the course of the year, ten volumes have been published by Messrs. Marsh, Capen, Lyon and Webb, under the sanction of the Board, being the first ten of a series, to be issued under the name of the "School Library." Other volumes will follow as rapidly as they can pass through the press. In giving their joint sanction to the volumes thus published, nothing was further from the intentions of the Board, than to attempt any control over the free choice of the committees employed to purchase books for the district libraries. But it is well known to all who have turned their thoughts to the subject, that an ample supply of instructive books, in the various departments of useful knowledge, does not exist throughout the community. The establishment of social libraries, in the various towns of the Commonwealth, has ever been deemed very desirable; and since increased attention has been turned to the subject of education of late years, it has been universally admitted that the collection of a district School Library, in each district, is an object scarcely inferior in importance to the support of the school. In fact it is essentially a part of the School System; for to what avail are our children taught to read, if good books are not accessible to them? It was doubtless in this view of the subject, that the Legislature of the Commonwealth, following the example which had been recently set in New York, (a state whose enlightened and liberal care of the interests of education is entitled to the highest praise), was induced, in the law already alluded to, to authorize a small annual appropriation for the purchase of School Libraries, *by those districts disposed to make it.* It was no part of the design of the Legislature to limit

the discretion of the School Committees in making the selection ; nor have the Board of Education, in sanctioning the publication of a series of works well adapted for School Libraries, designed or attempted any interference with the free choice of the Committees. They have as little wish as right to exercise such dictation. They have supposed, however, that it would be an acceptable service to Committees, hesitating in the multitude of publications daily sent forth from the press,—often forced on their notice by itinerant venders,—to have a selection of volumes recommended to them by a body of individuals, who cannot be suspected of any selfish interest, and whose unanimous approval of each volume excludes the possibility of the intrusion of sectarian or party prejudices. If the members of the Board may be permitted to judge of the wants and wishes of their fellow citizens, by what they have experienced individually as parents and school-committee men, such a recommendation, claiming no other character than that of a suggestion to be adopted or rejected by those concerned, cannot prove other than acceptable. It will still remain, equally as before, within the option of School Committees, to purchase such books as they may think best adapted to the wants of their districts. They may purchase those recommended by the Board ; or give the preference to other selections prepared in other places ; or they may make a free choice themselves, out of the almost innumerable volumes daily appearing.

The Board believe, also, that the inspection of the volumes already published, and of the titles of those proposed, (a list of which is subjoined), will effectually remove all apprehension which may have been felt, that the sanction by the Board of books suitable for a school

library, might have a sinister effect, either positive or negative, in reference to religious instruction. While the organization of the Board is itself, (it is hoped), a sufficient guaranty, that no such influence could be designed, the examination of the books already published, and of the list of those in preparation, will sufficiently show, that no such effect has ever, by inadvertence, taken place. The subject of religious instruction has been placed by the Legislature of the Commonwealth, where public sentiment and the necessity of the case would place it and keep it, even without legislation. In a community, where the utmost liberty of religious profession exists,—where it is the dearest birth-right of every man, that he may worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, any attempt to make the public schools, (supported as they are by the common expense for the common benefit), an instrument for advancing or depressing the opinions of any sect of christians, would meet what it would merit, the prompt rebuke of every considerate citizen. Although it may not be easy theoretically, to draw the line between those views of religious truth and of christian faith, which are common to all, and may, therefore, with propriety be inculcated in school, and those which, being peculiar to individual sects, are therefore by law excluded ; still it is believed, that no practical difficulty occurs in the conduct of our schools in this respect. It is the general sentiment of the people of all denominations, that religious instruction shall be left to parents at the fire-side and to the religious teachers, to whose ministrations parents and guardians may choose to confide their own spiritual guidance and that of those dependent on them. The Legislature therefore has but acted in ac-

cordance with the sense of the community, in prescribing that no books shall be directed by school committees, to be purchased or used in any of the town schools, "which are calculated to favor the tenets of any particular set of christians."

Although the School Library, whose publication has been sanctioned by the Board, does not consist of school books or books to be used in schools, it has still been considered, that the spirit of the law applies equally to the books to be purchased for school libraries, and this principle has governed the Board in giving their recommendation. They have not supposed, that books for religious instruction (strictly so called) were in the contemplation of the Legislature, in authorizing the formation of school libraries, but works of useful knowledge and general science; not excluding, however, those, in which scientific research is made subservient to the establishment and illustration of moral and religious truth. But, if in this they have mistaken the design of the Legislature,—if theological works were within the purview of the law authorizing the formation of district libraries, and if the restriction on school books just alluded to, is inapplicable to the library books, it will be in the power of school committees, that desire it, to obtain books of that description for the school libraries. The Board of Education attempts no interference with this course, however strong their opinion of its expediency and illegality.

With these explanations, the attention of the Legislature, of the friends of education, and the public generally, is invited to the volumes already published, which may serve as a fair specimen of the whole. It will be seen that they are recommended, in the first place, by

great neatness of execution, and by being afforded at a price, which considering the style of the typography, must be considered very reasonable. The Board attach some importance to these circumstances, believing that the formation of a taste for reading, in the community, depends, to a considerable degree, on a supply of books at a moderate price, which are correctly printed, and can be read with ease. Could the distaste for books sometimes manifested by young persons, whose character is not formed, be traced to its source, it might no doubt in many cases be found in the repulsive exterior, obscure type, unsightly paper, and incorrect printing of the few books within their reach. The books recommended by the Board, without any pretensions to typographical luxury, are free from all these objections.

With respect to the more important point of the subjects of the books, it is believed, they are without exception, such as a christian parent would approve. It has not been possible to proceed on a systematic plan, in giving, in the first ten volumes, a proportionate share to every branch of knowledge. Still there will be found to be a due degree of variety in their contents. The Natural Theology of Paley, with the illustrations and supplements of Sir Charles Bell and Lord Brougham, and the notes of Dr. Elisha Bartlett, by whom the present edition is prepared, is contained in two of the volumes. Nothing need be said in commendation of this great work, in which the fundamental truths of natural religion are placed on a basis which can never be shaken, and set forth with a beauty and variety of illustration never surpassed. An Abridgment of Mr. Irving's Life of Columbus, has been prepared for this Series, by its distinguished author, and is contained in another of

the volumes already published. Three volumes selected from Sparks' Library of American Biography, contain the lives of many of the most distinguished statesmen and heroes of our country. Four volumes of the Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons, by Dr. Henry Duncan, of Scotland, have been prepared for the School Library, by the Rev. Dr. Greenwood ; and will be found to contain the most interesting and instructive views of almost all the phenomena of the natural world.

For a fuller exposition of the views of the Board, as to the importance of this attempt to promote the formation of School Libraries, and of the principles on which their sanction has been given to the works published, reference is respectfully made to the Introductory Essay, prepared by a member of the Board, and prefixed to the first volume. They will only here ask leave to remark, that while they confidently believe that the volumes which have been and may be published under their sanction, will be found of a pure and salutary moral tendency, well adapted to feed and strengthen the appetite for useful knowledge, and entirely free from every thing which could corrupt or mislead the youthful mind ; they do not desire, as individuals, to be considered responsible for every opinion or shade of opinion, that may be expressed in the volumes. It would not be possible for any person or any number of persons, in any capacity, to select a library of books for family or school use, of which every volume in every sentence should faithfully reflect the precise opinions of the individual or individuals making the selection.

The Board beg leave, in this connection, to submit to the Legislature the expediency, in order to the further encouragement of the formation of School Libraries, of al-

lowing to the several School Districts, out of the income of the School fund, a sum equal to that, which may be appropriated by the District, not exceeding \$10 per annum to any District, the whole to be expended at the discretion of the School Committee. A similar measure has been adopted, it is understood in New York, and with the best effect.

It is a part of the duty of the Board prescribed by law, to prepare and lay before the Legislature, in a printed form, on or before the second Wednesday in January, annually, an abstract of the School Returns received by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. This duty has, according to law, been laboriously and faithfully performed, in the Office of the Secretary of State, under the superintendence of the Secretary of the Board.*

The attention of the Legislature is particularly invited to this abstract. In addition to the usual statistical facts, which are required by law to be embraced in the returns, extracts from the reports of the school committees will be found in many cases appended to the digest of the returns of the several towns. These extracts have been taken, with great labor, by the Secretary of the Board, from the copies of the reports of the school committees, required by law to be transmitted, with the returns, to the office of the secretary of state. It is believed that these extracts will give a considerably increased interest and value to the annual abstract of the returns. They present the views of the school committees of the Commonwealth on the subject of education in their several towns, the condition of

* The greater part of the work mentioned in the Report of the Secretary of State of the 1st Jan. 1840, as being done in his office for the Board of Education, was performed in the preparation of the statistical tables of the Abstract of the School Returns, under the law of 13th April, 1838.

their schools, and the measures deemed advisable or practicable by the committees for their improvement. These reports of the school committees are entitled to the highest respect, inasmuch as they are the utterance of the voice of the people, on the all-important subject of the education of their children,—expressed through the organs of their own immediate choice. It will appear conclusively from the extracts given from these reports, that the recent legislation of the Commonwealth, having for its object the improvement of the common schools; the measures adopted by the Board under the sanction or by the direction of the general court, to carry that legislation into effect; and the general suggestions, which have proceeded from the Board on the subject of the schools, and the improvements desirable or practicable in their condition, are fully sustained by the school committees of the Commonwealth, as far as can be judged from the reports, of which copies have been transmitted to the office of the secretary of state. Believing the citizens, who faithfully perform the duties of school committee men, to be benefactors of the public, in the highest sense of the word, the board cannot but express their own feeling of obligation to that portion of them, whose reports they have had the opportunity of consulting. The views and opinions contained in them are submitted to the Legislature, with full confidence that they will receive respectful consideration; and be found to give a value to the annual abstract, which it has not possessed in any former year.

During the past year, a semi-monthly journal, expressly devoted to the subject of education, entitled "The Common School Journal," has been published under the editorship of the Secretary of the Board.

Twenty-four numbers of this journal have appeared. The Board have no official connection with this publication, but they beg leave to express the opinion, that it will be found a valuable repository of documents on the subject of education, and an important auxiliary to the efforts made for its improvement.

For the discussion of other topics connected with this subject, and particularly that of the existing supply of books in the community, the Board would refer to the report of their Secretary, which is herewith submitted. In conclusion, they would invoke the continued attention of the Legislature to the great interests of that Common School education, which, as far as human means go, is the foundation of our prosperity as a people. It is not intended to utter any sentiment unfriendly to our higher seminaries of education. They too are the creation of the people, early called into being to supply the demands of the public service in the various relations of life; and they have been steadily countenanced and liberally endowed in all periods of our history. By the Constitution of the State, it is made the duty of "legislatures and magistrates in all future periods of the Commonwealth, to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences, and all seminaries of them; especially the University of Cambridge" (the only collegiate institution then in existence), public schools and grammar schools in the towns." But, without instituting any invidious comparison between the different classes of institutions for education; and firmly believing that the colleges and schools are the best friends of each other, and prosper most where they prosper together; the Board would still respectfully submit the opinion, that the improvement of the Common Schools is emphatically, and, in

the first instance, the concern of the people. They are intended for the children of the whole community, while comparatively, a small number receive a college education. The elementary school must be placed at the door of the individual citizen, or at least in the centre of the village, or many of those for whom it is intended, will fail to enjoy its benefits. While it is also desirable, that the means of a collegiate education should be as widely diffused as is possible, without lowering its standard, it must of necessity, in almost all cases, be sought at some distance from home, and if not found in one place, it may be obtained at another. For this reason, the state of the higher seminaries of learning does not of necessity determine the character of a community, even in reference to those branches of education for which they are provided. Not so with the Common Schools. Their condition is an infallible index of that of the community. Never was there a prosperous, virtuous, intelligent people, where the schools were in a languishing condition. They furnish the keys of knowledge to the mass of the people. They are the only avenue, by which the majority of the rising generation are able, as they grow up, to make their way into life, prepared to discharge its duties and fulfil its relations, with ease and credit to themselves, and with advantage to society.

The Board rejoice in the conviction, that this is a cause, which makes no appeal to sectarian or party feeling. It has hitherto proved a neutral ground, amidst all the collisions of judgment on other subjects. It appears to have been instinctively felt, by all good citizens, that the common school system required their united support, and that if once drawn into the vortex of party it

must sink. It has been the earnest endeavor of the Board to act in all respects in accordance with this principle ; and they have the satisfaction to state, that, as far as their agency and means of observation extend, it exists and operates on the minds of the people with unimpaired vigor.

It has also been to them a source of satisfaction to observe the interest manifested in several of our sister states and in foreign countries, in the efforts which have been made of late years, in this Commonwealth, to raise the standard of popular education. While Massachusetts has followed the example of New York and Connecticut, in the establishment of a school fund ; her own educational legislation and measures, particularly those relating to Normal Schools, are watched with anxiety in many of the other states. It has always been the boast of our ancient Commonwealth, that the education of the young has been an object of peculiar care ; and if she would sustain her enviable reputation in this respect, she must permit no relaxation of the zeal which has hitherto animated her. The cause of education is eminently the cause of the age ; and the impression is gaining strength both in Europe and in this country, that it is only by raising the standard of education, that the social, political, and moral condition of the people can be improved.

But all measures designed to promote education, must depend for their success, in this country, on the hearty coöperation of public opinion. It is only by enlightening and concentrating that opinion, that powerful effects can be produced. This is most effectually to be done, by persevering appeals to the understanding of the people, by placing the subject in every proper form of argument and persuasion before the public mind, and by

giving publicity to the facts, which, prove the defects in the system, as existing in some portions of the Commonwealth, and the great excellence to which it is brought in other portions ; thus encouraging a generous emulation, where nothing but good can result from the effort to excel. In the growing attention already bestowed on the subject, the Board behold the assurance of much good actually accomplished, and an encouragement, under the direction of the Legislature, to an increased zeal in the discharge of their duties.

EDWARD EVERETT,
GEORGE HULL,
EDMUND DWIGHT,
GEORGE PUTNAM,
ROBERT RANTOUL, JR.
THOMAS ROBBINS,
JARED SPARKS,
CHARLES HUDSON,
W. G. BATES.

Boston, 27th December, 1839.

The annexed advertisement of the Publishers of the School Library is subjoined in an abridged form. It contains the list of the books published and of those in preparation.

THE SCHOOL LIBRARY.

MARSH, CAPEN, LYON AND WEBB,

109, WASHINGTON STREET, BOSTON,

ARE NOW PUBLISHING, UNDER THE SANCTION OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION, A COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL AND SELECTED WORKS, ENTITLED 'THE SCHOOL LIBRARY.'

The LIBRARY will embrace two series of fifty volumes each; the one to be in 18mo., averaging from 250 to 280 pages per volume; the other in 12mo., each volume containing from 350 to 400 pages. The former, or *Juvenile Series*, is intended for children of ten or twelve years of age and *under*; the latter for individuals of that age, and *upwards*,—in other words, for advanced scholars and their parents.

The LIBRARY is to consist of *reading*, and not *school*, *class*, or *text* books; the design being to furnish youth with suitable works for perusal during their leisure hours; works that will interest, as well as instruct them, and of such a character that they will turn to them with pleasure, when it is desirable to unbend from the studies of the school room.

The plan will embrace every department of Science and Literature, preference being given to works relating to our own country, and illustrative of the history, institutions, manners, customs, &c. of our own people. Being intended for the *whole* community, no work of a sectarian or denominational character in religion, or of a partisan character in politics, will be admitted.

The aim will be to clothe the subjects discussed, in a popular garb,

that they may prove so attractive, as to lure the child onwards, fix his attention, and induce him, subsequently, to seek information from other and more recondite works, which, if put into his hands at the onset, would alarm him, and induce a disgust for that which would appear dry and unintelligible, and of course uninteresting.

The intention is not to provide information for any one class, to the exclusion of others, but to disseminate knowledge among all classes. The Publishers wish the children of the Farmer, the Merchant, the Manufacturer, the Mechanic, the Laborer,—all to profit by the lights of science and literature, that they may be rendered the more virtuous and happy, and become more useful to themselves, to one another, to the community, and mankind at large. To accomplish this desirable end, the LIBRARY will embrace so wide a range of subjects, that every child may find something which will prove useful and profitable to him, whatever his situation, circumstances, or pursuits, in after life may be.

The project is one of great extent, and vast importance; and, if properly carried out, must become of inestimable value to the young. Whether the anticipations of the Publishers, with regard to it, will be verified, time must determine; but, from the intellectual and moral, theoretical and practical character of those who have engaged to aid in the undertaking, they have good grounds for presuming that much will be accomplished, and that by their united efforts many obstacles, now existing to the mental, moral, and physical improvement of youth, will be removed, or at least be rendered more easily surmountable.

Among the individuals already engaged as writers for one or both Series, may be mentioned—the Hon. Judge Story, Jared Sparks, Esq., Washington Irving, Esq., Rev. Dr. Wayland, Professor Benjamin Siliman, Professor Denison Olmsted, Professor Alonzo Potter, D. D., Hon. Judge Buel, Jacob Bigelow, M. D., Elisha Bartlett, M. D., Rev. Charles W. Upham, Rev. F. W. P. Greenwood, D. D., Rev. Royal Robbins, Rev. Warren Burton, Charles T. Jackson, M. D., N. Hawthorne, Esq., Robert Rantoul, Jr., Esq., Professor Tucker, Professor Elton, Professor Francis Lieber, Rev. Calvin E. Stowe, D. D., Professor Joseph Alden, D. D., Professor B. B. Edwards, Hon. Alexander H. Everett, Hon. Isaac Hill, Hon. James M. Porter.

Mrs. Emma C. Embury, Mrs. Sarah J. Hale, Mrs. E. F. Ellet, Mrs. A. H. Lincoln Phelps, Mrs. H. E. B. Stowe, Miss E. Robbins, Miss E. P. Peabody, Miss Mary E. Lee, Miss C. M. Sedgwick.

No work will be admitted into the LIBRARY, unless it be approved by every member of the Board of Education ; which Board consists of the following individuals, viz., His Excellency Edward Everett, Chairman, His Honor George Hull, Edmund Dwight, Esq., Rev. George Putnam, Robert Rantoul, Jr. Esq., Rev. Thomas Robbins, D. D., Jared Sparks, Esq., Hon. Charles Hudson, Hon. George N. Briggs, and W. G. Bates, Esq.

The following works, have been printed, and constitute the first ten volumes of the 12mo series, viz.

LIFE OF COLUMBUS, by WASHINGTON IRVING, a new edition, (revised by the author,) including a Visit to Palos, and other additions, a portrait of the Great Navigator, a Map, and several illustrative engravings.

PALEY'S NATURAL THEOLOGY, in two volumes, with selections from the Dissertations and Notes of LORD BROUGHAM and SIR CHARLES BELL, illustrated by numerous wood cuts, and prefaced by a Life of the Author ; (with a portrait ;) the whole being newly arranged and adapted for The School Library, by ELISHA BARTLETT, M. D., *Professor of the Theory and Practice of Physic and Pathological Anatomy in Dartmouth College.*

LIVES OF EMINENT INDIVIDUALS, CELEBRATED IN AMERICAN HISTORY, in three vols., with portraits of Robert Fulton, Sebastian Cabot, and Sir Henry Vane, and autographs of most of the individuals.

VOL. I. CONTAINS

Life of MAJOR-GENERAL JOHN STARK, by His Excellency Edward Everett.

- " DAVID BRAINERD, by Rev. William B. O. Peabody.
- " ROBERT FULTON, by James Renwick, LL. D., *Professor of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry, in Columbia College, New York City.*
- " CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH, by George S. Hillard, Esq.

VOL. II. CONTAINS

Life of MAJOR-GENERAL ETHAN ALLEN, by Jared Sparks, *Professor of History in Harvard University.*

- " SEBASTIAN CABOT, by Charles Hayward, Jr. Esq.
- " HENRY HUDSON, by Henry R. Cleaveland, Esq.
- " MAJOR-GENERAL JOSEPH WARREN, by Alexander H. Everett, LL. D.
- " MAJOR-GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM, by O. W. B. Peabody, Esq.
- " DAVID RITTENHOUSE, by Professor James Renwick, LL. D.

VOL. III. CONTAINS

Life of WILLIAM PINKNEY, by Henry Wheaton, LL. D., *Author of History of the North-men.*

Life of **SIR HENRY VANE**, by Rev. Charles W. Upham.

“ **MAJOR-GENERAL ANTHONY WAYNE**, by John Armstrong, Esq.

“ **WILLIAM ELLERY**, by Edward T. Channing, Esq.

“ **MAJOR-GENERAL RICHARD MONTGOMERY**, by John Armstrong, Esq.

THE SACRED PHILOSOPHY OF THE SEASONS, illustrating The Perfections of God in the Phenomena of the Year. In 4 vols. By the Rev. **HENRY DUNCAN, D.D.**, of Ruthwell, Scotland; with important additions, and some modifications to adapt it to American readers, by the Rev. **F. W. P. GREENWOOD, D.D.**, of Boston.

The preceding ten volumes are now ready for delivery; and they will be followed, with all due despatch, by the subjoined, among others, provided they are approved by the Board of Education.

LIFE OF WASHINGTON, (with a portrait, and numerous engravings,) in two volumes, by the Rev. **CHARLES W. UPHAM**, *Author of 'the Life of Sir Henry Vane.'*

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE UNDER DIFFICULTIES; in two volumes, with Preface and Notes, by **FRANCIS WAYLAND, D.D.**, *President of Brown University.*

THE PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE UNDER DIFFICULTIES; illustrated by incidents in the Lives of **AMERICAN INDIVIDUALS**; in one volume, with Portraits.

HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY, in two volumes, with illustrative wood cuts.

CHEMISTRY, with illustrative wood cuts, by **BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, M. D., LL. D.**, *Professor of Chemistry, Mineralogy, &c. in Yale College.*

ASTRONOMY, by **DENISON OLMSTED**, *Professor of Natural Philosophy and Astronomy in Yale College.*

This work will be a popular treatise on the Science; it will also enter fully into its history, and consider the subject of Natural Theology, so far as it is related to Astronomy.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, by **PROFESSOR OLMSTED.**

Both of these works will be very fully illustrated by diagrams and wood engravings.

THE USEFUL ARTS, considered in connexion with the Applications of Science; in two volumes, with many illustrative engravings and wood cuts, by **JACOB BIGELOW, M. D.**, *Professor of Materia Medica in Harvard University, Author of 'the Elements of Technology,' &c. &c.*

A FAMILIAR EXPOSITION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES; containing a brief commentary on every clause, explaining the true nature, reasons, and objects thereof; designed for the use of school libraries, and general readers. By the Hon. JUDGE STORY, LL. D., *Dane Professor of Law in Harvard University, Author of 'Commentaries on the Constitution,' &c.*

LIFE OF DR. FRANKLIN.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF FRANKLIN, by JARED SPARKS, LL. D., *Professor of History in Harvard University, Author of 'the Life and Writings of Washington,' 'the Life and Writings of Franklin,' &c. &c.*

CHRISTIANITY AND KNOWLEDGE, by the Rev. ROYAL ROBBINS.

The design of this work is to show what Christianity has done for the human intellect, and what that has done for Christianity.

THE LORD OF THE SOIL, OR, PICTURES OF AGRICULTURAL LIFE, by Rev. WARREN BURTON, *Author of "The District School as it Was," &c. &c.*

SCIENCE AND THE ARTS, by the Rev. ALONZO POTTER, D.D., *Professor of Moral Philosophy and Rhetoric, in Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.*

The design of this work is to call attention to the fact that the Arts are the result of *intelligence*—that they have, each one its *principles* or *theory*—that these principles are furnished by *Science*, and that he, therefore, who would understand the Arts, must know something of *Science*; while, on the other hand, he who would see the true power and worth of *Science*, ought to study it in its applications. The work will be made up of *facts*, illustrating and enforcing these views—so arranged as to exhibit the invariable connexion between *processes* in *Art*, and *laws* in *Nature*. The importance of such a work requires no comment.

THE FARMER'S COMPANION, OR, ESSAYS ON THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF AMERICAN HUSBANDRY, by the Hon. JESSE BUEL, *Conductor of the 'Cultivator,' Albany, N. Y.*

This work is intended as an aid to the *Young Farmer*. The following, among other subjects, are treated of, viz.

1. The Importance of Agriculture to a Nation.
2. Improvement in our Agriculture practicable and necessary.
3. Some of the Principles of the new and improved Husbandry.
4. Agriculture considered as an Employment.
5. Earths and Soils.
6. Improvement of the Soil.

7. Analogy between Animal and Vegetable Nutrition.
8. Further Improvement of the Soil,
9. " " by Manures, Animal and Vegetable.
10. " " by Mineral Manures.
11. Principles and Operations of Draining.
12. Principles of Tillage.
13. Operations of Tillage, &c. &c.
14. Alternation of Crops.
15. Root Culture.
16. On Substituting Fallow Crops for naked Fallows.
17. On the Adaptation of particular Crops to certain Soils.
18. Effects of Cropping and Manuring.
19. Rules and Suggestions in Farming.
20. On the Improvement of Grass lands.
21. On the Cultivation of Grasses.
22. The Atmosphere and its Uses to the Husbandman.
23. On the Germination of Seeds.
24. On Stall-feeding.
25. The Economy of cutting up Corn.
26. On Rural Embellishment.

Address prepared to be delivered before the Agricultural and Horticultural Societies of New Haven county, Conn.

Appendix; containing a Collection of Facts and of Tables valuable to the Farmer.

Glossaries of Agricultural and Chemical Terms.

The work contains numerous Cuts, illustrative of the various operations spoken of and recommended.

GEOLOGY AND MINERALOGY, by CHARLES T. JACKSON, M. D., *Geological Surveyor of Maine and Rhode Island.*

STATISTICS OF THE UNITED STATES, by GEORGE TUCKER, *Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Virginia, Author of 'the Life of Jefferson,' &c. &c.*

AMERICAN TREES AND PLANTS, used for medicinal and economical purposes, and employed in the Arts, with numerous engravings; by PROFESSOR JACOB BIGELOW, *Author of 'Plants of Boston,' 'Medical Botany,' &c. &c.*

MORAL EFFECTS OF INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, by ROBERT RANTOUL, Jr., Esq.

LIVES OF THE REFORMERS, by Rev. ROMEO ELTON, *Professor of Languages in Brown University.*

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF DISTINGUISHED FEMALES by MRS. EMMA C. EMBURY, of Brooklyn, N. Y.

HISTORY OF EDUCATION, both Ancient and Modern, by

CALVIN E. STOWE, D.D. *Professor of Biblical Literature in Lane Seminary, Cincinnati, Ohio.*

DO RIGHT AND HAVE RIGHT, by MRS. ALMIRA H. LINCOLN PHELPS, *Principal of the Literary Department of the Young Ladies' Seminary, at West Chester, Pa., formerly of the Troy Seminary, N. Y., Author of 'Familiar Lectures on Botany,' 'Female Student,' &c.*

The object of this work may be gathered from the following remarks of Mrs. Phelps. "A popular work on the principles of law, with stories illustrating these principles, might be very profitable to people in common life, as well as to children. The ward cheated by a guardian, the widow imposed on by administrators or executors, the wife abandoned by a husband, with whom she had trusted her paternal inheritance, the partner in business, overreached by his crafty associate, for want of a knowledge of the operations of the law,—all these might be exhibited in such a way as to teach the necessity of legal knowledge to both sexes, and to all ages and classes."

THE FIRESIDE FRIEND, OR, FEMALE STUDENT; being Advice to Young Ladies on the important subjects of Education; by MRS. A. H. L. PHELPS.

The Publishers have also in preparation for this Series, a Universal History, a History of the United States, and of other Countries, a History of the Aborigines of our Country, a History of Inventions, works on various branches of Natural History, &c. &c. Many distinguished writers, not here mentioned, have been engaged, whose names will be in due time announced, although at present, we do not feel at liberty to make them public.

The following constitute the first seven volumes of the *Juvenile Series*, viz.

PICTURES OF EARLY LIFE, OR, SKETCHES OF YOUTH; by MRS. EMMA C. EMBURY, *of Brooklyn, N. Y.*

PLEASURES OF TASTE, AND OTHER STORIES selected from the Writings of JANE TAYLOR, with a sketch of her life, (and a likeness,) by Mrs. S. J. HALE.

MEANS AND ENDS, OR SELF TRAINING, by Miss CATHARINE M. SEDGWICK, *Author of 'The Poor Rich Man, and Rich Poor Man,' 'Live and Let Live,' 'Home,' &c. &c.*

THE JUVENILE BUDGET OPENED; Being Selections from the Writings of DR. JOHN AIKEN, with a sketch of his Life by Mrs. S. J. HALE.

HISTORICAL TALES, blending instruction with amusement; by Miss MARY E. LEE, *of Charleston, S. C.*

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF MRS. BARBAULD,
with a Sketch of her Life.

SCENES IN NATURE, OR, CONVERSATIONS ON LAND
AND WATER.

Among the works in the course of preparation for the smaller series,
are the following, viz.

CONVERSATIONS ON POLITICAL ECONOMY, by Prof.
J. ALDEN, of *Williams College*.

NEW ENGLAND HISTORICAL SKETCHES, by N. HAW-
THORNE, *Author of 'Twice Told Tales,' &c.*

CONVERSATIONS AND STORIES BY THE FIRE SIDE,
by MRS. SARAH J. HALE.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF MRS. SHERWOOD,
with a Life and Portrait.

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF MARIA EDGE-
WORTH, with a Life and Portrait.

CHEMISTRY FOR BEGINNERS, by BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, Jr.
*Assistant in the Department of Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Geology
in Yale College*; aided by Professor SILLIMAN.

FREDERICK HASKELL'S VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD,
by H. G. HALE, A. M., *Philologist to the Exploring Expedition*.

BIOGRAPHY FOR THE YOUNG, by Miss E. ROBBINS, *Author of 'American Popular Lessons,' 'Sequel' to the same, &c.*

THE WONDERS OF NATURE; illustrated by numerous cuts.

WORKS OF ART; illustrated by numerous cuts.

COUNTRY RAMBLES; by MRS. E. F. ELLET, of *Columbia, S.C.*

MY SCHOOLS AND MY TEACHERS, by MRS. A. H. LINCOLN
PHELPS.

The author's design, in this work, is to describe the Common Schools as they were in New England at the beginning of the present century; to delineate the peculiar characters of different Teachers; and to give a sketch of her various school companions, with their progress in after life, endeavoring thereby to show that the child, while at school, is forming the future man or woman.

It is not the intention of the Publishers to drive these works through the Press with an undue speed, in the hope of securing the market, by

the multiplicity of the publications cast upon the community ; they rely for patronage, upon the intrinsic merits of the works, and consequently time must be allowed the writers to mature and systematize them. The more surely to admit of this, the two Series will be issued in sets of five and ten volumes at a time. Besides the advantage above alluded to, that will result from such an arrangement, it will place THE SCHOOL LIBRARY within the reach of those Districts, which, from the limited amount of their annual funds, would not otherwise be enabled to procure it.

The works will be printed on paper and with type expressly manufactured for the Library ; will be bound in cloth, with leather backs and corners, having gilt titles upon the backs and for greater durability, cloth hinges inside of the covers.

The *larger Series* will be furnished to Schools, Academies, &c. at *seventy-five cents* per volume, and the *Juvenile Series* at *forty cents* per volume ; which the Publishers advisedly declare to be cheaper, than any other series of works that can be procured at home or abroad, bearing in mind their high intellectual character, and the style of their mechanical execution.

The Publishers solicit orders from School Committees, Trustees, Teachers, and others, for either or both Series, and wish particular directions *how, to whom, and to what place* the books shall be forwarded.

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN :—

After discharging, for another year, the duties of the office you have conferred upon me, I respectfully submit my Third Annual Report. During the last year, I have visited all the counties in the State, and met, in convention, at central and convenient places, such friends of Education, as chose to assemble ;—I have maintained an active correspondence with all parts of the Commonwealth, on subjects pertaining to the means and processes of popular instruction, and I have superintended the preparation and printing of the Annual Abstract of the School Returns for the school year 1838–9. The Abstract is a document of unusual value and interest, from the fact of its containing selections from the reports of school committees, made by them, last spring, to their respective towns ;—copies of which reports were forwarded to the office of the Secretary of State, in conformity with the existing provisions of law. As, in the special Report, made to the Board and prefixed to the Abstract, I have given a brief statement of its contents, and of the principles observed in preparing it, I will here only add, that I regard it as one of the most useful documents on the subject ever presented to the people of the State. Our system of Common Schools will have advanced very far towards perfection, when all the wise and excellent suggestions contained in that document shall have been reduced to practice.

Having collected, arranged and condensed a considerable number of facts on a few important topics, I proceed to lay the results before the Board ; and I take the liberty to accompany them with such views and conclusions, as a careful consideration of them has suggested to me.

I feel fully justified in affirming, that the prospects of the rising generation are daily growing brighter, by means of the increasing light which is shed upon them from our Common Schools. I refer

here, more particularly, to such proofs, as are hardly susceptible of being condensed into statistical tables, or even of being presented as isolated facts ;—these speak for themselves. But I refer to such indications of returning health, as prove to the watchful attendant that the crisis of the malady has passed. Stronger feelings and firmer convictions of the importance of our Common Schools are taking possession of the public mind, and where they have not yet manifested themselves in any outward and visible improvement, they are silently and gradually working to that end.

In determining the rate of annual advancement, however, which the friends of this cause are authorized reasonably to expect, it should not be forgotten, that all improvements in the system, depend ultimately upon the people themselves, and upon the school officers, whom, in their several towns and districts, they see fit to elect. All improvements in the schools, therefore, suppose and require a simultaneous and corresponding improvement in public sentiment, and in the liberality of the citizens, who, by a major vote, from year to year, measure out the pecuniary means for their support, and elect the officers who are to superintend the application of those means. Progress which must be so thorough, must necessarily be slow. But the thoroughness is a compensation for the slowness, for when a revolution is once wrought, it will be enduring. The Legislature, having conferred upon the Board of Education no authority, as to the amount of money to be raised, the teachers to be employed, the books, apparatus or other instruments of instruction to be used, the condition of the houses in which the schools are taught ; nor, indeed, as to any other subject, which can, in the slightest degree, abridge the power or touch the property of towns or districts, the responsibility, in all these respects, continues to rest, where it always has rested, and where, it is to be hoped, it always will rest, with the towns and districts themselves. On these points, encouragement may be highly beneficial ; compulsion would counterwork its own purposes.

Hence, it is obvious, that if the Board or the Legislature should devise and promulgate the wisest system imaginable, and define the exact processes by which it could be executed and all its fruits realized, the administration of that system must still be left with the local authorities. In the last stage of the process, and at the very

point, where the means are applied to the objects, they must pass through the hands of the town and district officers, and of the teachers, whom they employ. In our system of Public Instruction, therefore, it is emphatically true, that the influences flowing from the Legislature or from any advisory body, may have their quality entirely changed, by being assimilated to the character and views of the men, through whose hands they eventually pass ;—just as the nutritious juices, which ascend from the roots of a tree, may lose their original properties and be made to produce fruits of various flavor, according to the nature of the engrafted scions, through whose transforming pores they flow. Wherever, therefore, we find improvements in the schools, it is a gratifying proof, that higher views are prevailing in the community in which those improvements originate.

I advert to these facts respecting the authority, or rather the want of authority, in the Board, and their entire dependence upon the efficient coöperation of the public, because I occasionally meet with misapprehensions respecting their office, and powers and consequent duties ;—some persons, looking to the Board for action, in matters of which they have not the slightest official cognizance, and others, deploring their possession of powers, of which there is no trace nor indication to be found, either in the law which created them, or in any of their official or unofficial proceedings.

It will not be expected, that I should communicate, in detail, the proofs, that might be adduced, of an increased and increasing public interest in our Common Schools ; but it may be gratifying to the Board to be made acquainted with a few of them. In Greenfield, the shire town of Franklin county, containing a population of nearly two thousand, the sum raised by taxes for the support of schools, in each of the years 1836 and 1837, was \$800, only ; and the schoolhouse, in their central district, was mainly valuable as showing how school-houses should not be built. During the last year the sum raised by taxes, in the town, was increased to \$1,700, and the central district, (which has been incorporated, as a separate School District,) has provided itself with a large and beautiful house, at an expense of \$3,300, and has established an annual school therein. It remains to be seen what influence the incorporation of the central district will exert upon the exterior districts in the town. The originators of

the measure anticipate the most favorable results, and they seem to be almost pledged to their fellow-townsmen for their realization. Roxbury was one of the towns, required by law to keep a town school ; but since the year 1826, when the present provision of the law in regard to town schools, was enacted, it has belonged to that large class of towns which have non-complied with the requisition. The largest sum, as it appears by the Abstracts, heretofore raised by that town, is \$5,000. This year, the town has raised the sum of \$14,500, and has established the town school required by law, and voted to its teacher one of the most liberal salaries given in the State. The town of Gloucester has also put in operation a town school. In Phillipston, in Worcester county, five new and commodious schoolhouses have been erected ; and the town of Chatham in Barnstable county, raised last March, \$4,000, for the improvement of their schoolhouses only. Until the present year, the principal district in the town of Edgartown, in Duke's county, had maintained its school upon so extraordinary a plan, that, in two or three important particulars, there was little possibility of its becoming worse. This district had made no provision for its children under seven years of age. Between the ages of seven and sixteen, there were about two hundred children belonging to it. For the accommodation of all these children, it had but one schoolhouse, which was old, small, and with but one room, and that room, incapable of receiving more than about forty pupils, i. e. one-fifth of the whole number of children, between the ages of seven and sixteen. This number, was divided into five classes, which took their turns in attending the school,—one class attending one-fifth part of the year, or about ten weeks, and then being dismissed for the remaining forty-two weeks of the year ; then another class attending the same length of time, to be dismissed in its turn, and so on through the five classes. Surely, it would be unreasonable to anticipate much improvement in the children, under this reversal of the proper length between term-time and vacation. While, in many other places in the State, not more favorably situated than this, children were in school forty or forty-two weeks of the year, and out of it but ten or twelve, these were in it but ten and out of it forty-two. But as soon as the attention of that people was turned to the demands of this

great interest, and to a comparison of their own, with the condition of other places,—with a promptitude and liberality, highly creditable to them, they made immediate provision for the instruction of their children between the ages of four and seven years, and they have just completed a commodious house, having two rooms, and of more than four times the capacity of the former. Other places might be referred to, such as Salisbury in Essex county, Hanson in Plymouth county, &c. &c., which, in erecting schoolhouses, have not been satisfied with estimating the aggregate number of cubic feet in forty or fifty children, and graduating the capacity of the school room by the result; but, in the construction of their houses, have provided for the comfort and health of the pupils, and for the best moral and social influences upon their character. The city of Boston is erecting twelve large and elegant schoolrooms, this season. One house alone will cost, by estimate, twenty thousand dollars, and is intended to be constructed throughout, on the most improved plan. Taking all the constituents of a good schoolhouse into the account, decidedly the best, I have yet seen in the State, is one, erected during the last year, in the upper district of the town of Chelsea.

It must not, however, be inferred, that the most extensive reform is not still necessary in regard to those edifices, where the business of education, for the great mass of the children in the State, is carried on. By what I have learned from authentic sources, and have seen, in three annual circuits through all parts of the Commonwealth, respecting its three thousand schoolhouses, I am convinced that there is no other class of buildings within our limits, erected either for the permanent or the temporary residence of our native population, so inconvenient, so uncomfortable, so dangerous to health by their construction within, or so unsightly and repulsive in their appearance without. Every other class of edifices, whether public or private, has felt the hand of reform. Churches, courthouses, even jails and prisons, are rebuilt, or remodelled, great regard being paid, in most cases to ornament, and in all cases to health, to personal convenience and accommodation. But the schoolhouse, which leads directly towards the church, or rather may be considered as its vestibule, and which furnishes to the vast majority of our children, the only public means they will ever enjoy, for qualifying themselves to profit by its counsels, its promises, its warnings, its consolations;—

the schoolhouse, which leads directly from the courthouse, from the jail and from the prison, and is, for the mass of our children, the great preventive and safeguard against being called or forced into them, as litigants or as criminals ;—this class of buildings, all over the State, stands in afflicting contrast with all the others. The courthouses, which are planned and erected under the advice and control of the county authorities, and of the leading men in the county for themselves and in which they spend but a few terms in the year, and the meeting-houses, where the parents spend but a few hours in a week, are provided with costly embellishments, and with every appurtenance, that can gratify taste or subserve comfort ; but the houses, where the children, in the most susceptible period of their lives, spend from thirty to forty hours in a week, seem to be deserted by all public care, and abandoned to cheerlessness and dilapidation. I do not think there are more than a hundred of the three thousand schoolhouses in the State, erected in a style at all superior, even if equal, to that of the very poorest public buildings of any other kind, in the very poorest and most sparsely populated portions of the Commonwealth. Leaving the city of Boston out of the account, it would be easy to select a hundred churches, which the parents have built for themselves, worth all the three thousand schoolhouses, collectively, which they have built for the children. At the rate of one hundred a year, it will take more than a quarter of a century to renovate them all. Of many of them, however, it may be predicted with certainty, that, however long they may be able to endure the weight of public opinion, their own weight, they cannot long sustain.

To those, whose views of public and private duty can never be satisfied by any thing short of a universal education for the people, it will be gratifying to be informed, that a new interest has been excited during the last year, in behalf of the children of persons employed upon our public works. This class of children, heretofore, has not shared in the provisions for education, made by our laws, and has rarely been embraced in any of the numerous plans for moral improvement, devised and sustained by private charity ; and hence they have been growing up in the midst of our institutions, uninstructed even in those rudiments of knowledge, without which self-education is hardly practicable. During the last year, a few inhabitants of the town of Middlefield, (which is situated in the western part of Hampshire

county,) commiserating the destitute condition of the children along the line of the rail-road, in their vicinity, took active measures to supply them with the means of instruction. A gentleman of that town, Mr. Alexander Ingham, was the first to engage in, and has been most active in carrying on, this Samaritan enterprise. The good example extended, and a considerable number of children, along the line of work, were soon gathered, either into the public schools, or, where that was impracticable, into schools established expressly for them, at private expense. At the Common School Convention in the county of Hampden, held in the month of August last, the condition of these children, and the necessity of some further measures in their behalf, constituted one of the topics of inquiry and discussion. A committee was appointed, of which Mr. Ingham was chairman, to collect the facts of the case. From this committee I have learned, that there were, in the month of September last, more than three hundred children, between the ages of four and sixteen, belonging to the laborers on the rail-road west of Connecticut river, who were not considered as entitled to the privileges of the public schools, or were in such a local situation as not to be able to attend them. A pregnant fact also, in relation to the subject is, that, in the enumeration of all the children of all ages, belonging to that class of people, "a large proportion of them are under the age of four years." Owing to efforts since made by private individuals, a very large majority of all these children, who are of a suitable age, are now enjoying the benefits of Common School education.

Another subject, respecting which I have sought for information from all authentic sources, and to which I have given especial attention in my circuit through the State, is the observance or non-observance of the law "for the better instruction of youth, employed in manufacturing establishments." This law was enacted in April, 1836, and was to take effect on the first day of April, 1837. The substance of its provisions, is, that, no owner, agent, or superintendent of any manufacturing establishment, shall employ any child, under the age of fifteen years, to labor in such establishment, unless such child shall have attended some public or private day school, where instruction is given by a legally qualified teacher, at least three months of the twelve months, next preceding any and every year, in which

such child shall be so employed. The penalty for each violation is fifty dollars. The law has now been in operation sufficiently long, to make manifest the intentions of those to whom its provisions apply, and whether those humane provisions are likely to be observed or defeated. From the information obtained, I feel fully authorized to say, that, in the great majority of cases, the law is obeyed. But it is my painful duty also to say, that, in some places, it has been uniformly and systematically disregarded. The law is best observed in the largest manufacturing places. In several of the most extensive manufacturing villages and districts, all practicable measures are taken to prevent a single instance of violation. Some establishments have conducted most generously towards the schools ; and, in one case, (at Waltham), a corporation, besides paying its proportion of taxes for the support of the public schools in the town, has gratuitously erected three schoolhouses,—the last in 1837, a neat, handsome, modern, stone building, two stories in height,—and maintained schools therein, at a charge, in the whole, upon the corporate funds, of a *principal* sum of more than seven thousand dollars. It would be improper for me here, to be more particular than to say, that these generous acts have been done by the “*Boston Manufacturing Company*” ; though all will regret, that the identity of the individual members, who have performed these praiseworthy deeds, should be lost in the generality of the corporate name.

Comparatively speaking, there seems to have been far greater disregard of the law, by private individuals and by small corporations, especially where the premises are rented from year to year, or from term to term, than by the owners or agents of large establishments. Private individuals, renting an establishment for one, or for a few years,—intending to realize from it what profits they can, and then to abandon it and remove from the neighborhood or town where it is situated,—may be supposed to feel less permanent interest in the condition of the people, who are growing up around them, and they are less under the control of public opinion in the vicinity. But, without seeking an explanation of the cause, there cannot be a doubt as to the fact.

It is obvious, that the consent of two parties is necessary to the infraction of this law, and to the infliction of this highest species of injustice upon the children whom it was designed to protect. Not

only must the employer pursue a course of action, by which the godlike powers and capacities of the human soul are wrought into thoroughmade products of ignorance, and misery, and vice, with as much certainty and celerity, as his raw materials of wool or cotton are wrought into fabrics for the market by his own machinery ; but the parent also must be willing to convert the holy relation of parent and child, into the unholy one of master and slave, and to sell his child into ransomless bondage, for the pittance of money he can earn. Yet, strange to say, there are many parents, not only of our immigrant, but of our native population, so lost to the sacred nature of the relation they sustain towards the children whom they have brought into all the solemn realities of existence, that they go from town to town, seeking opportunities, to consign them to unbroken, bodily toil, although it involves the deprivation of all the means of intellectual and moral growth ;—thus pandering to their own vicious appetites, by adopting the most efficient measures, to make their offspring as vicious as themselves.

If, in a portion of the manufacturing districts, in the State, a regular and systematic obedience is paid to the law, while, in other places, it is regularly and systematically disregarded, the inevitable consequences to the latter will be obvious, upon a moment's reflection. The neighborhood or town where the law is broken will soon become the receptacle of the poorest, most vicious and abandoned parents, who are bringing up their children to be also as poor, vicious and abandoned as themselves. The whole class of parents, who cannot obtain employment for their children, at one place, but are welcomed at another, will circulate through the body politic, until at last, they will settle down as permanent residents, in the latter ; like the vicious humors of the natural body, which, being thrown off by every healthy part, at last accumulate and settle upon a diseased spot. Every breach of this law, therefore, inflicts direct and positive injustice, not only upon the children employed, but upon all the industrious and honest communities in which they are employed ; because its effect will be to fill those communities with paupers and criminals ;—or, at least, with a class of persons, who, without being absolute, technical paupers, draw their subsistence in a thousand indirect ways, from the neighborhood, where they reside ; and without being absolute criminals in the eye of the law, still commit a thousand inju-

rious, predatory acts, more harassing and annoying to the peace and security of a village, than many classes of positive crimes.

While water-power only is used for manufacturing purposes, a natural limit is affixed, in every place, to the extension of manufactories. The power being all taken up, in any place, the further investment of capital and the employment of an increased number of operatives, must cease. While we restrict ourselves to the propulsion of machinery by water, therefore, it is impossible, that we should have such an extensive manufacturing district as, for instance, that of Manchester in England, because we have no streams of sufficient magnitude for the purpose. But Massachusetts is already the greatest manufacturing State in the Union. Her best sites are all taken up, and yet her disposition to manufacture appears not to be checked. Under such circumstances, it seems not improbable, that steam-power will be resorted to. Indeed this is already done to some extent. Should such improvements be made in the use of steam, or such new markets be opened for the sale of manufactured products, that capitalists, by selecting sites where the expense of transportation, both of the raw material and of the finished article, may be so reduced as, on the whole, to make it profitable to manufacture by steam, then that agency will be forthwith employed ; and, if steam is employed, there is no assignable limit to the amount of a manufacturing population, that may be gathered into a single manufacturing district. If, therefore, we would not have, in any subsequent time, a population like that of the immense city of Manchester, where great numbers of the laboring population live in the filthiest streets, and mostly in houses, which are framed back to back, so that in no case is there any yard behind them, but all ingress and egress, for all purposes, is between the front side of the house and the public street,—if we would not have such a population, we must not only have preventive laws, but we must see that no cupidity, no contempt of the public welfare for the sake of private gain, is allowed openly to violate or clandestinely to evade them. It would, indeed, be most lamentable and self-contradictory, if, with all our institutions devised and prepared on the hypothesis of common intelligence and virtue, we should rear a class of children, to be set apart and, as it were, dedicated to ignorance and vice.

After presenting to the Board one further consideration, I will leave this subject. It is obvious, that children of ten, twelve, or fourteen years of age, may be steadily worked in our manufactories, without any schooling, and that this cruel deprivation may be persevered in for six, eight, or ten years, and yet, during all this period, no very alarming outbreak shall occur to rouse the public mind from its guilty slumber. The children are in their years of minority, and they have no control over their own time, or their own actions. The bell is to them, what the water-wheel and the main shaft are to the machinery, which they superintend. The wheel revolves and the machinery must go ; the bell rings and the children must assemble. In their hours of work, they are under the police of the establishment ; at other times, they are under the police of the neighborhood. Hence this state of things may continue for years, and the peace of the neighborhood remain undisturbed, except, perhaps, by a few nocturnal or sabbath-day depredations. The ordinary movements of society may go on without any shocks or collisions,—as, in the human system, a disease may work at the vitals and gain a fatal ascendancy there, before it manifests itself on the surface. But the punishment for such an offence, will not be remitted, because its infliction is postponed. The retribution, indeed, is not postponed, it only awaits the full completion of the offence ; for this is a crime of such magnitude, that it requires years for the criminal to perpetrate it in, and to finish it off thoroughly, in all its parts. But when the children pass from the condition of restraint to that of freedom,—from years of enforced but impatient servitude to that independence for which they have secretly pined, and to which they have looked forward, not merely as the period of emancipation, but of long-delayed indulgence ;—when they become strong in the passions and propensities that grow up spontaneously, but are weak in the moral powers that control them, and blind in the intellect which foresees their tendencies ;—when, according to the course of our political institutions, they go, by one bound, from the political nothingness of a child, to the political sovereignty of a man,—then, for that people, who so cruelly neglected and injured them, there will assuredly come a day of retribution. It scarcely needs to be added, on the other hand, that if the wants of the spiritual nature of a child, in the successive stages of its growth, are duly supplied ; then a regularity in manual employment,

is converted from a servitude into a useful habit of diligence, and the child grows up in a daily perception of the wonder-working power of industry, and in the daily realization of the trophies of victorious labor. A majority of the most useful men who have ever lived, were formed under the happy necessity of mingling bodily with mental exertion.

But by far the most important subject, respecting which I have sought for information, during the year, remains to be noticed. While we are in little danger of over-estimating the value of Common Schools, yet we shall err egregiously, if we regard them as ends, and not as means. A forgetfulness of this distinction would send the mass of our children of both sexes into the world, scantily provided either with the ability or the disposition to perform even the most ordinary duties of life. Common Schools derive their value from the fact, that they are an instrument, more extensively applicable to the whole mass of the children, than any other instrument ever yet devised. They are an instrument, by which the good men in society can send redeeming influences to those children, who suffer under the calamity of vicious parentage and evil domestic associations. The world is full of lamentable proofs, that the institution of the family may exist for an indefinite number of generations, without mitigating the horrors of barbarism. But the institution of Common Schools is the offspring of an advanced state of civilization, and is incapable of coexisting with barbarian life, because, should barbarism prevail, it would destroy the schools, should the schools prevail, they would destroy barbarism. They are the only civil institution, capable of extending its beneficent arms to embrace and to cultivate in all parts of its nature, every child that comes into the world. Nor can it be forgotten, that there is no other instrumentality, which has done or can do so much, to inspire that universal reverence for knowledge, which incites to its acquisition. Still, these schools are means and not ends. They confer instruments for the acquisition of an object, but they are not the object itself. As they now are, or indeed, are ever likely to become, our young men and young women will be most insufficiently prepared to meet the various demands which life will make upon them, if they possess nothing but what these schools bestow.

In my last Report, I communicated to the Board some general facts respecting the lamentable prevalence of mechanical, instead of

intelligent, reading in our schools ;—from which it appeared, that the exercise of reading, to which so much time is devoted, was, to a woful extent, performed by the machinery of the organs of speech, and hence was unaccompanied by any vital, receiving, assorting, adjudicating action of the mind. I also briefly indicated the difference between the vast amount of knowledge, which can be acquired through the medium of intelligent reading, compared or contrasted, with the scantiness of information, obtainable in all other ways ;—showing, that without the ability to read, our knowledge is confined to a mere handbreadth of space, and to a mere span of time ; while with this ability, we are enlarged from our imprisonment into a region that has no circumference,—we are endued with a power of being present, at pleasure, with the distant and the past,—we can visit, with the rapidity of thought, any nation or spot on the surface of the globe, and become the coeval of time, and a contemporary with the great names and events of all historic eras.

Having, then, the object of a powerful and an exemplary people in view, the next step in the inquiry is obviously this ;—after the rising generation have acquired habits of intelligent reading in our schools, *what shall they read?*—for with no books to read, the power of reading will be useless, and with bad books to read, the consequences will be as much worse than ignorance, as wisdom is better. What books, then, are there, accessible to the great mass of the children in the State, adapted to their moral and intellectual wants, and fitted to nourish their minds with the elements of uprightness and wisdom? This is the principal, the ultimate inquiry ; the other was strictly preliminary to this, and without it, comparatively useless.

Let any person go into one of our country towns or districts, of average size, consisting, as most of them do, of an agricultural population, interspersed with mechanics and here and there a few manufacturers, and inquire, from house to house, what books are possessed, and he will probably find the Scriptures, and a few school books in almost every family. These are protected by law, even in the hands of an insolvent ; so that the poor are as secure in their possession as the rich. In the houses of professional men,—the minister, the lawyer, the physician,—he would find small professional libraries, intermixed with some miscellaneous works, not of a professional character ;—in the houses of religious persons, a few religious books, of

this or that class, according to the faith of the owner ;—in the houses of the more wealthy, where wealth is fortunately combined with intelligence and good taste, some really useful and instructive books, but where the wealth is unfortunately united with a love of display, or with feeble powers of thought, he would find a few elegantly bound Annuals, and novels of a recent emission. What he would find in other houses,—and these the majority,—would be few, and of a most miscellaneous character ; books which had found their way thither, rather by chance than by design, and ranging in their character between very good and very bad. Rarely, in such a town as I have supposed, will a book be found, which treats of the nature, object and abuses of different kinds of governments, and of the basis and constitution and fabric of our own ; or one on economical or statistical science ; or a treatise on general ethics and the philosophy of the human mind ; or popular and intelligible explanations of the applications of science to agriculture and the useful arts,—or the processes by which the latter are made so eminently serviceable to man. Rarely will any book be found, partaking of the character of an Encyclopædia, by a reference to which thousands of interesting questions, as they daily arise, might be solved, and great accessions to the stock of valuable knowledge be imperceptibly made ;—quite as rarely will any books containing the Lives of Eminent British or American Statesmen be found, or books treating of our ante-revolutionary history ;—and most rarely of all, will any book be found on Education,—education at home,—physical, intellectual, and those rudiments of a moral and religious education, in which all agree,—the most important subject, that can possibly be named to parent, patriot, philanthropist, or christian. And in the almost total absence of books, adapted to instruct parents how to educate their children, so, there are quite as few which are adapted to the capacities of the children themselves, and might serve, in some secondary degree, to supply the place of the former. Some exceptions would of course be expected, where so many particulars are grouped under so few heads ; but, from all I have been able to learn, after improving every opportunity for inquiry and correspondence, I am led to believe, that, as it regards the *private* ownership of books, the above may be taken as a fair medium for the State. In small towns, almost wholly rural in their occupations, the books,

though fewer, may generally be better ; while in cities and large towns, though more numerous, yet a larger proportion of them is worse. Whatever means exist, then, either for inspiring or for gratifying a love of reading in the great mass of the rising generation, are mainly to be found, if found at all, in public libraries.

As the tastes and habits of the future men and women, in regard to reading, will be only an enlargement and expansion of the tastes and habits of the present children, it seemed to me one of the most desirable of all facts, to learn, as far as practicable, under what general influences, those tastes and habits are now, daily, forming. For who can think, without emotion, and who can remain inactive under the conviction, that every day which now passes, is, by the immutable law of cause and effect, predestinating the condition of the community, twenty, thirty, or forty years hence ; that the web of their character and fortunes is now going through the loom, to come out of it, at that time, of worthy or of worthless quality, beautified with colors and shapes of excellence, or deformed by hideousness, just according to the kind of the woof which we are daily weaving into its texture ? Every book, which a child reads with intelligence, is like a cast of the weaver's shuttle, adding another thread to the indestructible web of existence.

In the general want of private libraries, therefore, I have endeavored to learn what number of public libraries exist ; how many volumes they contain, and what are their general character, scope and tendency ; how many persons have access to them, or,—which is the most material point,—how many persons do *not* have access to them ;—and finally, how many of the books are adapted to prepare children to be free citizens and men, fathers and mothers, even in the most limited signification of those vastly comprehensive words. It seemed to me, therefore, that nothing could have greater interest or significance, than an inventory of the means of knowledge, and the encouragements to self-education, possessed by the present and the rising generation.

Simultaneously with this inquiry, I have pursued a collateral one,—not so closely, although closely,—connected, with the main object. A class of institutions has lately sprung up in this state, universally known by the name of Lyceums, or Mechanics' Institutes,

before some of which, courses of Popular Lectures, on literary or scientific subjects, are annually delivered, while others possess libraries and reading-rooms, and in a very few cases, both these objects are combined. These institutions have the same general purpose in view, as public libraries, viz. ; that of diffusing instructive and entertaining knowledge, and of exciting a curiosity to acquire it ; though they are greatly inferior to libraries, in point of efficiency. As the proportion of young persons, who attend these lectures, and frequent these reading-rooms, compared with the whole number of attendants, is much greater than the proportion they bear to the whole people, the institutions may justly be regarded as one of the means, now in operation, for enlightening the youth of the State. At any rate, an inventory of the means of general intelligence, which did not include these institutions, would justly be regarded as incomplete.

For the purpose of obtaining authentic information on the above-mentioned subjects, I addressed to school committees and other intelligent men residing, respectively, in every town in the Commonwealth, the following statement and inquiries :—

“ Among the ‘ means of Popular Education,’ respecting which it is my duty to seek for information, is the existence of Town, Social, or District School Libraries, composed of books, suited to the wants of children and youth, and adapted to their state of mental advancement. Other means of Popular Education are to be found in Mechanics’ Institutes, and Lyceums, Literary Societies, or Associations under any name, instituted for the delivery of courses of Popular Lectures.

“ As it would be highly useful and interesting to know what means exist, either for cultivating or gratifying habits of reading among the young ; and also to what extent persons of a more advanced age avail themselves of the researches and attainments of other minds, through the medium of regular courses of Lectures, on literary or scientific subjects, I take the liberty to propose the following questions :

“ 1. Is there in your town, any Town, Social, or District School Library ?

“ 2. If so, how many, what number of volumes do they contain, and what is their present value, as nearly as you can estimate it ?

“ 3. What number of persons have a right of access to them ?

“ 4. Are the books of which they consist, adapted to the capacities of children and youth, and have they good intellectual and moral tendencies ? Please be as particular as your convenience will allow respecting the character of the books.

"5. Have you any Mechanics' Institute in your Town, either with or without reading-rooms ?

"6. If any, what number of members belong to it ?

"7. Have you Lyceums, Literary Societies, or Associations under any name, before which courses of Popular Lectures on literary or scientific subjects, have been delivered within the year last past ?

"8. If any, what number of persons have usually attended the lectures ?

"9. What amount of money has been expended for Lectures, within the last year ?

"10. What is the probable amount of the incidental expenses for Lecture rooms, fuel, lights, attendance, &c. ?

"11. At what time were the above institutions established, and are they in a flourishing or declining condition ?"

The following is an account of the libraries in the different counties of the State.

SUFFOLK COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,) . . . 81,984.

No. of Social Libraries,	.	.	.	.	36
No. of vols.,	.	.	.	.	81,881
Estimated value,	.	.	.	.	\$130,055 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	.	.	.	.	8,885

Thirty-two thousand of these volumes belong to the Boston Athenæum.

In addition to the above there are ten Circulating Libraries, containing about twenty-eight thousand volumes, and estimated to be worth about ten thousand dollars. About three thousand two hundred persons are supposed to have taken books from these libraries, during the last year.

There are fifteen common, or district* school libraries, in the city, which is almost one-third part of the whole number in this State.*

* For the numerous individual facts, of which the above is the aggregate, I am principally indebted to the Hon Samuel A. Eliot, Mayor of the city, and *ex officio* chairman of the school committee,—who caused them to be collected for me. From the same source, I also derived the facts respecting the Lyceums and Lectures in the city.

ESSEX COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,) . . .	93,689.
No. of Social Libraries,	31
No. of volumes,	22,597
Estimated value,	\$20,383 00
No. of proprietors and persons, having access in their own right.	2,435

One town has made no return, viz. Salisbury; population, 2,675.

These libraries include the Salem Athenæum, which contains 8,000, and the library of the Salem Mechanics' Association, which contains 1,800 volumes.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,) . . .	98,565.
No. of Social Libraries,	43
No. of vols.,	18,957
Estimated value,	\$6,403 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	3,694

Eight towns have made no returns, viz. :—Acton, population, 1,071 ; Bedford, pop. 858 ; Chelmsford, pop. 1613 ; Malden, pop. 2303 ; Pepperell, pop. 1586 ; Sherburne, pop. 1073 ; Sudbury, pop. 1388 ; Townsend, pop. 1749. Total population not heard from in Middlesex Co., 11,641.

WORCESTER COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837), . . .	96,551.
No. of Social Libraries,	54
No. of vols.	11,134
Estimated value,	\$7,038 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	2,912

One town has made no return, viz. :—Hubbardston ; pop. 1780.

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,) . . .	30,413.
No. of Social Libraries,	17
No. of vols.	3,339
Estimated value,	\$2,415 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	626

HAMPDEN COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,) . . .	33,627.
No. of Social Libraries,	17
No. of vols.,	5,173
Estimated value,	\$3,698 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	492

FRANKLIN COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,) . . .	28,665.
No. of Social Libraries,	11
No. of vols.,	4,092
Estimated value,	\$2,905 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	1,147

One town has made no return, viz. :—Sunderland ; population, 729.

BERKSHIRE COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,) . . .	39,101.
No. of Social Libraries,	17
No. of vols.,	3,780
Estimated value,	\$2,259 00
No. of proprietors, or persons, having access in their own right,	405

Five towns have made no returns, viz. :—Becket, pop. 957 ;
Clarksburgh, pop. 386 ; Mt. Washington, pop. 377 ; New Marl-

boro', pop. 1,570 ; Windsor, pop. 887. Total population not heard from in Berkshire Co., 4,177.

NORFOLK COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,)	50,399.
No. of Social Libraries,	30
No. of vols.,	14,331
Estimated value,	\$7,567 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	2,591

BRISTOL COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,)	58,152.
No. of Social Libraries,	8
No. of vols.,	5,725
Estimated value,	\$5,280 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	822

PLYMOUTH COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,)	46,253.
No. of Social Libraries,	27
No. of vols.,	5,359
Estimated value,	\$2,602 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	930

BARNSTABLE COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,)	31,109.
No. of Social Libraries,	6
No. of vols.,	1,110
Estimated value,	\$933 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	310

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

55

DUKES' COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,) . . .	3,785.
No. of Social Libraries,	1
No. of vols.,	250
Estimated value, not given.	
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	56

NANTUCKET COUNTY.

Population (May, 1837,) . . .	9,048.
No. of Social Libraries, (Athenæum.)	1
No. of vols.,	2,300
Estimated value, not given.	
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	400

RECAPITULATION.

Aggregate of Social Libraries in the State, . . .	299
No. of vols.	180,028
Estimated value,	\$191,538 00
No. of proprietors, or persons having access in their own right,	25,705
No. of towns not heard from,	16
Total population not heard from,	20,966

In addition to the above, there are, in the State, from ten to fifteen *town* libraries, that is, libraries to which all the citizens of the town have a right of access. They contain, in the aggregate, from three to four thousand volumes, and their estimated value is about fourteen hundred dollars.

There are, also, about fifty district school libraries, containing about ten thousand volumes, worth, by estimation, about thirty-two or thirty-three hundred dollars.

The "Coffin School," (incorporated) at Nantucket, has a library of fourteen hundred volumes. A few of the academies have small libraries, but I have not been able to ascertain the number of volumes, or their value.

There are also a few Circulating Libraries in different parts of the State ;—probably the number, out of the city of Boston, does not exceed twenty.

From these results, it appears, that the books belonging to the public Social Libraries in the city of Boston, constitute almost one-half of all the books in the Social Libraries of the State ; and yet, but about one-tenth part of the population of the city, has a right of access to them. If we include the Circulating Libraries, much more than one-half of all the volumes in this class of libraries, is in the city.

If we suppose, that each proprietor or share holder, in the Social Libraries, represents, on an average, four persons, (and this, considering the number of share holders, who are not heads of families, is, probably, a full allowance,) the population, represented by them, as having access to all the Social Libraries in the State, will be a small fraction over one hundred thousand ; leaving a population of more than six hundred thousand, who have no such right of access.

To come as near to exactness as practicable, it ought to be added, that, in a few instances, very small libraries have been referred to in the returns, the particulars respecting which, my informants thought it not worth while to ascertain ; and, also, that in a very few cases, the number of volumes, their value, and the number of proprietors, have been omitted in the returns. Probably, six per cent., added to the above returns, would be an ample allowance for all these omissions. On the other hand, it is to be observed, that, in many cases, the number of books has been taken from the catalogues of the libraries, without any deduction for missing volumes ; and that the same individual has, in some instances, a right in two or more libraries, and, therefore, has been counted, twice or more, as a proprietor.

The number of volumes composing the libraries of the principal public, literary and scientific institutions in the State, is as follows :

Harvard University, including the students' libraries, contains a little more than fifty thousand volumes.

The library of Williams College contains four thousand volumes,

and that of the "Adelphic Union," a society connected with the college, eighteen hundred volumes,—total, five thousand eight hundred volumes.

The college and society libraries at Amherst College, contain thirteen thousand volumes.

The several libraries connected with the different departments of the Institution at Andover, contain but little less than twenty thousand volumes.

The American Antiquarian Society at Worcester has a library of more than twelve thousand volumes. It has fifteen thousand separate tracts, bound up in one thousand and thirty-five volumes, and it has also one thousand two hundred and fifty-one volumes of newspapers.

Thus, omitting the Circulating Libraries, it appears, that the aggregate of volumes in the public libraries of all kinds, in the State, is about three hundred thousand. This is also exclusive of the Sabbath School Libraries, which will be adverted to hereafter. To these three hundred thousand volumes, but little more than one hundred thousand persons, or one-seventh part of the population of the State, have any right of access, while more than six hundred thousand have no right therein.

Of the towns heard from, there are one hundred, (almost one-third of the whole number in the State,) which have neither a town, social, nor district school library therein. What strikes us with amazement, in looking at these facts, is, the inequality with which the means of knowledge are spread over the surface of the State ;—a few, deep, capacious reservoirs, surrounded by broad wastes. It has long been a common remark, that many persons read too much ; but here we have proof, how many thousands read too little. For the poor man and the laboring man, the art of printing seems hardly yet to have been discovered.

The next question respects the character of the books, composing the libraries, and their adaptation to the capacities and mental condition of children and youth. In regard to this point, there is, as might be expected, but little diversity of statement. Almost all the answers concur in the opinion, that the contents of the libraries are not adapted to the intellectual and moral wants of the young ;—an opin-

ion, which a reference to the titles, in the catalogues, will fully sustain. With very few exceptions, the books were written for adults, for persons of some maturity of mind, and possessed, already, of a considerable fund of information ; and, therefore, they could not be adapted to children, except through mistake. Of course, in the whole collectively considered, there is every kind of books ; but probably no other kind, which can be deemed of a useful character, occupies so much space upon the shelves of the libraries, as the historical class. Some of the various histories of Greece and Rome ; the History of Modern Europe, by Russell ; of England, by Hume and his successors ; Robertson's Charles V. ; Mavor's Universal History ; the numerous Histories of Napoleon, and similar works, constitute the staple of many libraries. And how little do these books contain, which is suitable for children ! How little do they record but the destruction of human life, and the activity of those misguided energies of men, which have hitherto almost baffled the beneficent intentions of nature for human happiness. Descriptions of battles, sackings of cities, and the captivity of nations, follow each other with the quickest movement, and in an endless succession. Almost the only glimpses, which we catch of the education of youth, present them, as engaged in martial sports, and in mimic feats of arms, preparatory to the grand tragedies of battle ;—exercises and exhibitions, which, both in the performer and the spectator, cultivate all the dissocial emotions, and turn the whole current of the mental forces into the channel of destructiveness. The reader sees inventive genius,—not employed in perfecting the useful arts, but exhausting itself in the manufacture of implements of war ;—he sees rulers and legislators, not engaged in devising comprehensive plans for universal welfare, but in levying and equipping armies and navies, and extorting taxes to maintain them,—thus dividing the whole mass of the people into the two classes of slaves and soldiers,—enforcing the degradation and servility of tame animals upon the former, and cultivating the ferocity and bloodthirstiness of wild animals, in the latter. The highest honors are conferred upon men, in whose rolls of slaughter, the most thousands of victims are numbered ;—and seldom does woman emerge from her obscurity,—indeed, hardly should we know that she existed,—but for her appearance to grace the triumphs of the

conqueror. What a series of facts would be indicated by an examination of all the treaties of peace, which history records; they would appear like a grand index to universal plunder. The inference which children would legitimately draw from reading like this, would be, that the tribes and nations of men had been created only for mutual slaughter, and that they deserved the homage of posterity for the terrible fidelity with which their mission had been fulfilled. Rarely do these records administer any antidote, against the inhumanity of the spirit they instil. In the immature minds of children, unaccustomed to consider events under the relation of cause and effect, they excite the conception of magnificent palaces or temples for bloody conquerors to dwell in, or in which to offer profane worship for inhuman triumphs, without a suggestion of the bondage and debasement of the myriads of slaves, who, through lives of privation and torture, were compelled to erect them;—they present an exciting picture of long trains of plundered wealth, going to enrich some city or hero, without an intimation, that, by industry and the arts of peace, the same wealth could have been earned, more cheaply than it was robbed;—they exhibit the triumphal return of warriors, to be crowned with honors worthy of a god, while they take the mind wholly away from the carnage of the battle-field, from desolated provinces, and a mourning people. In all this, it is true, there are many examples of the partial and limited virtue of patriotism, but few only of the complete virtue of philanthropy. The courage held up for admiration is generally of that animal nature, which rushes into danger to inflict injury upon another; but not of that divine quality, which braves peril for the sake of bestowing good,—attributes, than which there are scarcely any two in the souls of men, more different, though the baseness of the former is so often mistaken for the nobleness of the latter. Indeed, if the past history of our race is to be much read by children, it should be rewritten, and while it records those events, which have contravened all the principles of social policy, and violated all the laws of morality and religion, there should, at least, be some recognition of the great truth, that, among nations as among individuals, the highest welfare of all can only be effected by securing the individual welfare of each;—there should be some parallel drawn, between the *historical* and the *natural* relations of the race, so that the tender and

immature mind of the youthful reader may have some opportunity of comparing the right with the wrong, and some option of admiring and emulating the former, instead of the latter. As much of History now stands, the examples of right and wrong, whose nativity and residence are on opposite sides of the moral universe, are not merely brought and shuffled together, so as to make it difficult to distinguish between them, but the latter are made to occupy almost the whole field of vision, while the existence of the former is scarcely noticed. It is as though children should be taken to behold, from afar, the light of a city on fire, and directed to admire the splendor of the conflagration, without a thought of the tumult and terror and death, reigning beneath it.

Another very considerable portion of these libraries, especially where they have been recently formed or replenished, consists of novels and all that class of books, which is comprehended under the familiar designations of "fictions," "light reading," "trashy works," "ephemeral," or "bubble literature," &c. This kind of books has increased immeasurably, within the last twenty years. It has insinuated itself into public libraries and found the readiest welcome with people, who are not dependent upon libraries for the books they peruse. Aside from newspapers, I am satisfied that the major part of the *unprofessional* reading of the community is of the class of books, above designated. Amusement is the object ;—mere *amusement*, as contradistinguished from instruction in the practical concerns of life ;—as contradistinguished from those intellectual and moral impulses, which turn the mind, both while reading and after the book is closed, to observation and comparison and reflection upon the great realities of existence.

That reading merely for amusement, has its fit occasions and legitimate office, none will deny. The difficulty of the practical problem consists in adhering to that line of reasonable indulgence, which lies between mental dissipation, on the one hand, and a denial of all relaxation on the other. Life is too full of solemn duties to be regarded as a long play-day ; while incessant toil lessens the ability for useful labor. In feeble health, or after sickness, or severe bodily or mental labor, an amusing, captivating, enlivening book, which levies no tax upon the powers of thought for the pleasure it gives, is a

delightful resource. It is medicinal to the sick, and recuperative to the wearied mind. Especially is this the case, where a part only of the faculties have been intensely exerted. Then, to stimulate those which have lain inactive, brings the quickest relief to those which have been laboring. It is not repose to them, merely ; but repose, as it were, tranquillized by music. But the difference is altogether incalculable and immense, between reading such books as an amusement only, and reading them as restorers from fatigue or as soothers in distress ; between indulging in them, as a relaxation or change from deep mental engrossment, and making their perusal a common employment or business. One enervates, the other strengthens and restores ; one disables from the performance of duty, the other is one of the readiest preparations for a return to it. In reading merely for amusement, the mind is passive, acquiescent, recipient, merely. The subjects treated are not such as task its powers of thought. It has no occasion to bring forth and re-examine its own possessions ; but it is wafted unresistingly along, through whatever regions the author chooses to bear it. It is this passiveness, this surrendering of the mind, that constitutes the pernicious influence of reading for amusement, when carried to excess ; because a series, a reiteration of efforts is just as indispensable, in order to strengthen any faculty of the intellect, as a series of muscular exercises is, to strengthen any limb of the body,—and in reading for amusement, these efforts are not made. Even when we read the most instructive books, and transfer to our own minds the knowledge they contain, the work is but half done. Most of their value consists in the occasions they furnish to the reader, to exert all his own vigor upon the subject, and, through the law of mental association, to bring all his own faculties to act upon it. A stream of thought from his own mind should mingle with the stream that comes from the book. Such reading creates ability, while it communicates knowledge. The greatest accumulation of facts, until the comparing and the foreseeing faculties have acted upon them, is as useless as a telescope or a watch would be, in the hands of a savage. Single ideas may be transferred from an author to a reader, but habits of thinking are intransmissible ; they must be formed within the reader's own mind, if they are ever to exist there. Actual observation, within its field, is better than reading, but the advantage

of reading consists in its presenting a field, almost infinitely larger and richer, than any actual observation can ever do ;—yet, if the reader does not take up the materials presented, and examine them one by one, and learn their qualities and relations, he will not be able to work them into any productions of his own ;—he will be like a savage who has passed through the length of a civilized country and just looked at its machinery, its ships and houses, who, when he returns home, will not be able to make a better tool, or build a better canoe, or construct a better cabin than before. It is his own hand-work, on the materials of his art, which, after thousands of trials and experiments, at last turns the rude apprentice into such an accomplished artisan, that his hand instantaneously obeys his will, and in executing the most ingenious works, he loses the consciousness of volition ; and so it is by energetic, long-continued mental application to the elements of thought, that the crude and meager conceptions of a child are refined, and expanded, and multiplied into the sound judgment and good sense of a man of practical wisdom. Something, without doubt, is referrible to the endowments of nature, but with the mass of men, much more is attributable to that richest of all nature's endowments, the disposition to self-culture, through patient, long-sustained effort. No man, therefore, who has not made these efforts, times innumerable, and profited in each succeeding case, by the error or imperfection of the preceding, has any more right to expect the possession of wisdom, discretion, foresight, than the novice in architecture or in sculpture has to expect, that, in his first attempt, he shall be able to equal the Church of St. Peter's, or chisel a perfect statue of Apollo. Now the bane of making amusement the sole object of one's reading, and the secret of its influence in weakening the mind, consist in its superseding or discarding all attendant exertion on the part of the reader. Without this exertion, the power of clear, orderly, coherent thought,—the power of seeing whether means have been adapted to ends,—becomes inactive, and at length withers away, like a palsied limb ; while, at the same time,—the attention being hurried over a variety of objects, between which nature has established no relations,—a sort of volatility or giddiness is inflicted upon the mind, so that the general result upon the whole faculties, is that of weakness and faintness combined.

What gives additional importance to this subject is the fact, that by far the most extensive portion of this reading for amusement, consists of the perusal of fictitious works. The number of books and articles, which, under the names of romances, novels, tales in verse or prose,—from the elaborate work of three volumes to the hasty production of three chapters or three pages,—is so wide-spread and ever-renewing, that any computation of them transcends the power of the human faculties. They gush from the printing-press. Their authors are a nation. When speaking of the reading public, we must be understood, with reference to the subject-matter of the reading. In regard to scientific works on government, political economy, morals, philosophy, the reading public is very small. Hardly one in fifty, amongst adults, belongs to it. For works of biography, travels, history, it is considerably larger. But in reference to fictitious works, it is large and astonishingly active. It requires so little acquaintance with our language, and so little knowledge of sublunary things and their relations, to understand them; and the inconvenience of failing to understand a word, a sentence or a page is so trivial;—so exactly do they meet the case of minds, that are ignorant, indolent and a little flighty, that they are welcomed by vast numbers. Other books are read slowly, commenced, laid aside, resumed, and perused in intervals of leisure. These are run through with almost incredible velocity. Take a work on morals, of the same size with a novel; the reading of the former will occupy a month, the latter will be despatched without intervening sleep. Of works, unfolding to us the structure of our own bodies, and the means of preserving health, and of the constitution of our own minds, and the infinite diversity of the spiritual paths, which the mind can traverse, each bringing after it, its own peculiar consequences;—of works, laying open the complicated relations of society, illustrative of the general duties belonging to all, and of the special duties, arising from special positions;—of works, making us acquainted with the beneficent laws and properties of nature and their adaptations to supply our needs and enhance our welfare,—of works of these descriptions, editions of a few hundred copies only are printed, and then the types are distributed, in despair of any further demand; while of fictitious works, thousands of copies are thrown off at first, and they are stereotyped in confi-

dence that the insatiable public will call for new supplies. It was but a few years after the publication of Sir Walter Scott's Poems and Novels, that fifty thousand copies of many of them had been sold in Great Britain alone. Under the stimulus which he applied to the public imagination, the practice of novel reading has grown to such extent, that his imitators and copyists have overspread a still wider field, and covered it to a greater depth. In this country, the reading of novels has been still more epidemic, because, in most parts of it, so great a portion of the people can read, and because, owing to the extensiveness of the demand, they have been afforded so cheaply, that the price of a perusal has often been less than the value of the light by which they were read.

To give some idea of the difference in the sales of different kinds of works, it may be stated, that of some of Bulwer's and Marryatt's novels, from ten to fifteen thousand copies have been sold in this country; while of that highly valuable and instructive work, Sparks's American Biography, less than two thousand copies, on an average, have been sold; and of Prescott's Ferdinand and Isabella, only about thirty-six hundred. The latter is considered a remarkably large sale, and is owing, in no inconsiderable degree, to the superior manner in which that interesting history was written.

No discerning person, who has arrived at middle age, and has been at all conversant with society, can have failed to remark the effect upon mind and character, of reading frivolous books, when pursued as a regular mental employment, and not as an occasional recreation;—the lowered tone of the faculties, the irregular sallies of feeling, the want of a power of continuous thought on the same subject, and the imperfect views taken of all practical questions,—an imperfection compounded by including things not belonging to the subject, and by omitting things which do. Any such person will be able to give his attestation to the fact and be willing to advance it into an axiom, that *light reading makes light minds*.

So far as it respects fictitious writings, the explanation of their weakening and dispersive influence, is palpable to the feeblest comprehension. All men must recognize the wide distinction between *intellect* and *feeling*,—between *ideas* and *emotions*. These two classes of mental operations are inherently distinct

from each other in their nature ; they are called into activity by different classes of objects ; they are cultivated by different processes, and as one or the other predominates in the mental constitution, widely different results follow both in conduct and character. All sciences are the offspring of the intellect. On the other hand, there cannot be poetry or eloquence without emotion. From the intellect come order, demonstration, invention, discovery ; from the feelings,—enthusiasm, pathos, and sublime sentiments in morals and religion. The attainments of the greatest intellect are gathered with comparative slowness, but each addition is a permanent one. The process resembles that by which material structures are reared, which are laboriously built up, brick by brick, or stone by stone, but when once erected, are steadfast and enduring. But the feelings, on the other hand, are like the unstable elements of the air or ocean, which are suddenly roused from a state of tranquillity into vehement commotion, and as suddenly subside into repose. When rhetoricians endeavor to excite more vivid conceptions of truth, by means of sensible images, they liken the productions of the intellect to the solidity and stern repose of time-defying pyramid or temple ; but they find symbols for the feelings and passions of men, in the atmosphere, which obeys the slightest impulse and is ready to start into whirlwinds or tempests, at once. To add to the stock of practical knowledge and to increase intellectual ability, requires voluntary and long-sustained effort ; but feelings and impulses are often spontaneous, and always susceptible of being roused into action by a mere glance of the eye, or the sound of a voice. To become master of an exact, coherent, full set, or complement of ideas, on any important subject, demands fixed attention, patience, study ; but emotions or passions flash up suddenly, and while they blaze, they are consumed. In the mechanical and useful arts, for instance, a knowledge of the structure and quality of materials, of the weight and motive power of fluids, of the laws of gravitation, and their action upon bodies in a state of motion or rest, is acquired by the engineer, the artisan, the machinist,—not by sudden intuition, but by months and years, of steady application. Arithmetic, or the science of numbers ; geometry, or the science of quantities ; astronomy, and the uses of astronomical knowledge in navigation, must all have been profoundly

studied,—the almost innumerable ideas, which form these vast sciences, must have been discovered and brought together, one by one, —before any mariner could leave a port on this side of the globe, and strike, without failure, the smallest town or river, on the opposite side of it. And the same principle is no less true in regard to jurisprudence, to legislation, and to all parts of social economy, so far as they are worthy to be called sciences. But that part of the train of our mental operations, which we call the emotions or affections ;—those powers of our spiritual constitution, denominated the propensities and sentiments, which give birth to appetite, hope, fear, grief, love, shame, pride, at the very first, produce a feeling, which is perfect or complete, of its kind. An infant cannot reason, but may experience as perfect an emotion of fear, as an adult. Mankind, for thousands of years, have been advancing in the attainments of intellect, but the fathers of the race had feelings, as electric and impetuous, as any of their latest descendants. In every intellectual department, therefore, there must be accurate observation in collecting the elementary ideas,—these ideas must be compared, arranged, methodized, in the mind,—each faculty, which has cognizance of the subject, taking them up individually, and, as it were, handling, assorting, measuring, weighing them, until each one is marked at its true value and arranged in its right place, so that they may stand ready to be reproduced, and to be embodied in any outward fabric or institution, in any work of legislation or philosophy, which their possessor may afterwards wish to construct. Such intellectual processes must have been performed by every man, who has ever acquired eminence in the practical business of life ; or who has ever made any great discovery in the arts or sciences,—except, perhaps, in a very few cases, where discovery has been the result of happy accident. It is this perseverance in studying into the nature of things, in unfolding their complicated tissues, discerning their minutest relations, penetrating to their centres, that has made such men as Lord Bacon, Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Franklin, Watt, Fulton, Sir Humphrey Davy, and Dr. Bowditch,—men, the light of whose minds is now shed over all parts of the civilized world, as diffusively and universally as the light of the sun, and as enduring as that light. And so it is in all the other departments of life, whether higher or humbler ;—not more in the case of the diplomatist, who is appointed an ambassador to manage a difficult

negotiation at a foreign court, than in that of the agent, who is chosen by a town, because of his good sense and thorough knowledge of affairs, to conduct a municipal controversy. It is to such habits of thought and reflection upon the actual relations of things, as they exist, and as God has constituted them, that we are indebted for the men, who know how to perform, each day, the duties of each day, and in any station, the duties of that station ;—men, who, because of their clearheadedness and wisdom, are nominated as arbitrators or umpires by contending parties, or whose appearance in the jury-box is hailed by the counsellors and suitors of the court ;—men, whose work has not to be done over again, and whose books or reports do not need *errata* as large as themselves. But the feelings or emotions, so far from being dependant on these intellectual habits, for their vividness and energy, are even more vivid and energetic, when freed from control and direction. The intellect hems in the feelings by boundaries of probability and naturalness. It opposes barriers of actual and scientific truth to their devious wanderings and flights. It shows what things can be, and what things cannot be, and thus arrests the imagination, when it would otherwise soar or plunge into the impossible and the preternatural. The savage, with his uncultivated intellect, has fields for the roamings of fancy, which can have no existence to the philosopher ; just as an idolater has an immensity for the creations of his superstition, which to the enlightened Christian, is a nonentity.

Now, it is the feelings and not the intellect,—the excitable, or spontaneously active powers of the mind, and not its steady, day-laboring faculties,—which the great body of fictitious works appeals to and exercises. Were the whole mass of these works analyzed, and reduced to its component elements, nineteen parts in every twenty, would be found addressed to the emotions and feelings, and not to the reason and judgment. Their main staple and texture are a description of the passions of love, jealousy, hope, fear, remorse, revenge, rapture, despair,—the whole constituting a dark ground of guilt and misery, occasionally illumined by a crossing beam of extatic joy, or almost superhuman virtue. But the trials and temptations described are rarely such, as any human being will fall into ; and the virtues celebrated are such, as few will ever have an opportunity to achieve. Hence, sympathy and aversion, desire and apprehension, are kept at the highest

tension ; but it is upon incidents and scenes, outside of actual life,—not in this world, and often not capable of being transferred to it. In the mean time, the understanding sleeps; the intellect is laid aside. Those faculties have nothing to do, by which we comprehend our position in life, and our relations to society,—by which we discover what our duty is, and the wisest way to perform it. The mind surrenders itself to the interest and excitement of the story, while the powers, by which we discern tendencies and balance probabilities, are discarded ;—nay, those sober thoughts are unwelcome intruders, which come to break the delusion, and to repress an insane exhilaration of the feelings,—until, at last, the diseased and infatuated mind echoes that pagan saying, so treasonable to truth, that it would prefer to go wrong with one guide, rather than right with another,—as though, in a universe which an all-wise Being has formed, any thing could be as well as to go right. In the reports of some of the French hospitals for lunatics, *the reading of romances* is set down as one of the standing causes of insanity.

It is the perusal of this class of works, as a regular or principal mental employment, of which I am speaking ; and it is easy for any one, acquainted with the laws of the human mind, and with the causes, which foster or stint its growth, to predict the effect of such reading both upon the will and the capacity to perform the everyday duties and charities of life. Could all temporal duties be written down in a catalogue, we should find, that private, domestic, in-door duties would constitute vastly the greatest number. The social duties, growing out of relationship, friendship, and neighborhood, would make up the next largest and most important class ;—for, while all others only call upon us occasionally, the demands of these are perpetual. Now, for the appropriate and punctual discharge of these numerous and ever-recurring duties, a knowledge of all the scenes and incidents, the loves and hates, the despairs and raptures, contained in all the fictions ever written, is about as fit a preparation, as a knowledge of all the “castles in the air,” ever built by visionaries and dreamers, would be to the father of a houseless family, who wished to erect a dwelling for their shelter, but was wholly ignorant both of the materials and the processes, necessary for the work. And the reason is, that, in the regions of fiction, the imagination can have

every thing in its own way,—it can arrange the course of events as it pleases, and still bring out the desired results. But in actual life, where the law of cause and effect pervades all, links all, determines all, the appropriate consequences of good or evil follow from their antecedents, with inevitable certainty. The premises of sound or false judgments, of right or wrong actions, being given, the course of nature and Providence predestines the conclusions of happiness or misery, from which we cannot escape. Hence, the mind,—which, in the world of imagination, has been relieved from all responsibility for consequences, being rigorously held to abide by consequences whenever it descends to sublunary affairs, and being ignorant of the connexion between causes and effects,—finds all its judgments turned into folly, and all its acts terminating in disaster or ruin.

Nor are the *moral* effects of this kind of reading, when systematically pursued, less pernicious than the intellectual ; for it will be found that those, who squander their sympathies most prodigally over distresses that were never felt, are the firmest stoics over calamities actually suffered. The inveterate novel reader will accompany heroes and heroines to the ends of the earth, and in tears bewail their fancied misfortunes ; while he can command the serenest equanimity over sufferings in the next street or at the next door. The continued contemplation of pain, without any accompanying effort to relieve it, forms the habit of dissociating feeling from action, and presents the moral anomaly of one, who professes to feel pity but withholds succor. In all healthy minds, judicious action follows virtuous impulse. Nor do the splendid heroes of romance ever earn their greatness and their honors, by a youth of study and toil, by contemning the seductions of inglorious ease ;—and thus they never hold out to the young mind the example of industry, and perseverance, and self-denial, as the indispensable prerequisites to greatness. Far more baneful are the effects, when characters, whose lives are immersed in secret profligacy, are varnished to the eye of the world, by wealth and elegance ; or when audacious criminals are endowed with such shining attractions of wit, and talent, and address, as cause the sympathy of the reader to outweigh his abhorrence.

But, if it is unfortunate that so many people should addict themselves to the reading of fiction, because their minds are immature

and unbalanced, and have no touchstone, whereby they can distinguish between what is extravagant, marvellous and supernatural, and what, from its accordance to the standard of nature, is simple, instructive and elevating ; it is doubly unfortunate, that so many excellent young persons should be misled into the same practice, either from a laudable desire to maintain some acquaintance with what is called the literary world, and to furnish themselves with materials for conversation, or from a vague notion that such reading, alone, will give a polish to the mind and adorn it with the graces of elegance and refinement. In endeavoring to elucidate the manner in which this indulgence entails weakness upon the understanding, and unfits it for a wise, steady, beneficent course of life, in a world so abounding as this is, in solemn realities and obligations, I would most sedulously refrain from uttering a word in disparagement of a proportionate and measured cultivation of what are called polite literature and the polite arts, in all their branches. While we have sentiments and affections, as well as thoughts and ideas ; while, in the very account of the creation of the world, it is said that some things were made to be *pleasant to the sight*, and others good for sustenance ; and while our spiritual natures are endowed with susceptibilities to enjoy the former, as well as with capacities to profit by the latter ; any measures for the elevation of the common mind, which do not recognize the existence and provide for the cultivation of the first class of powers, as well as for the second, would form a community of men, wholly uncouth and rugged in their strength, and almost unamiable, however perfect might be their rectitude. The mind of every man is instinct with capacities above the demands of the workshop or the field,—capacities which are susceptible of pure enjoyments from music, and art, and all the embellishments of civilized life, and whose indulgence would lighten the burden of daily toil. All have susceptibilities of feeling too subtle and evanescent to find any medium of utterance, except in the language of poetry and art, and too refined to be called into being, but by the creations of genius. The culture of these sensibilities makes almost as important a distinction between savage and civilized man, as the training of the intellect ; and without such cultivation, though the form of humanity may remain, it will be disrobed of many of its choicest beauties. Still, in a world, where, by the

ordinations of Providence, utility outranks elegance ; where harvests to sustain life must be cultivated, before gardens are planted to gratify taste ; where all the fascinations of regal courts are no atonement for the neglect of a single duty ;—in such a world, no gentility or gracefulness of mind or manners, however exquisite and fascinating, is any substitute for practical wisdom and benevolence. Without copious resources of useful knowledge, in our young men and young women ; without available, applicable judgment and discretion, adequate to the common occasions and ready for the emergencies of life,—the ability to quote poetic sentiments, and expatiate on passages of fine writing, or a connoisseurship in art, is but mockery. Hence it is to be regretted, that so many excellent young persons, emulous of self-improvement, should commit the error of supposing, that an acquaintance with the institutions of society, with the real wants and conditions of their fellow-men, and with the means of relieving them, can be profitably exchanged for a knowledge of the entire universe of fiction ; or that it is wise, in their hours of study, to neglect the wonderful works of the Creator, in order to become familiar with the fables of men. Intellect must lay a foundation and rear a superstructure, before taste can adorn it. Without solid knowledge and good sense, there is no substance into which ornament or accomplishment can be inwrought. It is impossible to polish vacuity, or give a lustre to the surface of emptiness.

One other general remark is applicable to a large portion of this class of works. Most of them were written in Great Britain for British readers. Hence, they suppose and represent a state of society, where wealth outranks virtue, and birth takes precedence of talent except in extraordinary cases of mental endowment or attainment. They describe two classes of men, which we never ought to have,—one class, whose distinction and elevation are founded on the adventitious circumstances of birth or fortune, and another class who are the ignorant, degraded dependants upon the former ;—but they do not describe any class of industrious, intelligent, exemplary, just and benevolent men, so alive to the rights of others, that under no temptation would they become lords, and so conscious of their own, that under no force, would they remain slaves,—a class of men which we ought to have, and with a proper use of the blessings,

Heaven has given us, we may have. Surely, such books do not contain the models according to which the youth of a Republic should be formed.

I should have felt myself wholly unwarranted in thus commenting upon the prevalence of *amusing* and *fictitious*, compared with *useful* reading, and upon the pernicious consequences of indulgence in it, were it not, that the children of the State are now growing up, in this very condition of things, and under circumstances, too, which will lead them to commit the same error, and, of course, to suffer the same evil, except some new inducements can be found to win them from it. The number of these works, with the number of their readers, is now rapidly increasing,—not absolutely, only, but relatively, and in proportion to other and useful works. The materials of which they are composed have now been so often wrought over, that moderately imitative powers are amply sufficient for recasting them in slightly modified forms ;—originality and invention have ceased to be necessary. The cheapness, too, of this class of works, gives them a preference, not only for circulating, but for town and social libraries. I have been surprised at finding such numbers of them in the catalogues of the latter. I have heard of but one town or social library, from which they have been peremptorily excluded by an article in the constitution. The by-laws of one other library set up a certain standard for books, and empower a committee to burn all the non-conformists ; that is, the non-conforming books. In other places, authority, to dispose by sale of trivial or pernicious books, is given ;—and this leads me to another subject, in regard to the reading of the community, not less important than the preceding.

This subject is presented by the question, what do those persons read, who have not yet risen to the point of appreciating and admiring the better class of fictions and of recent literary works ? A taste for the better kinds of light reading presupposes a preference in the reader's mind, of what belongs to the spiritual, over what belongs to the merely animal part of our nature,—of mental, over sensual gratifications. A knowledge, too, of some of the more obvious phenomena of the material world, and of the operations of the human mind, has made many books ridiculous and contemptible, which once were consulted as oracles, and filled their readers with terror and reverential awe.

The fictions of the last century, whose texture consists of events, monstrous and supernatural, whose machinery is ghosts, hobgoblins, demons and demi-gods—written from one end to the other, in defiance not merely of experience but of possibility, and adapted to the lowest ignorance ;—these, in rare instances only, have been republished. They have been driven from shelves and tables, upon which the feeblest ray of the light of science has been cast. Yet even within the last year, large editions of *Dream-Books* and *Fortune-Tellers* have been published. But there is a kind of reading in the community, wholly unknown to the publishers of fashionable novels and of the better sort of ephemeral literature. To those who have not been in the way of knowing, nor in the habit of reflecting, what kind of reading is most congenial and welcome to the least educated portion of the people, and through what channels they are supplied, the facts which have existed and still exist, must be a source of alarm. Numerous itinerant booksellers are constantly on the circuit of the country, offering, from door to door, such books as, in the advancing knowledge and changing tastes of the times, are no longer salable at the bookstore nor inquired for at the circulating library. The precise extent of this traffic, it is impossible to determine ; yet from all I can learn, I am satisfied it is carried on to a very considerable degree, especially in inland towns and in the purlieus of populous places. One gentleman informed me, that in the vicinity of a manufacturing village where he lived, he had seen half a dozen of these book-pedlars in a fortnight. In communications received on the subject of established libraries, mention of similar facts has occasionally been made, although that was not one of the subjects on which information was sought. During the last autumn, I saw, in a beautiful, inland town, the contents of a pedler's vehicle, unladen and arranged in a stall, by the side of the street. I took occasion carefully to examine the books thus exposed for sale. Amongst several hundred volumes, there were not more than two or three books which any judicious person would ever put into the hands of a child, after he could read. The rest consisted of the absurdest novels of the last century, of stories of bucaniers, of pirates and murderers, of shipwrecks, of Newgate calendars, and accounts of other exciting and extraordinary trials, of different sizes and prices to meet the

ability of purchasers. On a temporary counter were spread out bundles of songs, in single sheets, some patriotic, some profane, and some obscene,—to be sold for a cent apiece. Amongst the books were Volney's Ruins and Paine's Age of Reason. At the time of this exposition for sale, a literary festival, occupying two days, was held in the same village ; on which occasion, profound, philosophical, literary, and religious discourses, were delivered to intelligent and gratified audiences. The stall, where the books were sold, was within a stone's throw of the church, where the anniversary was celebrated. Both exercises went on together. The thought, irrepressible on the occasion, was, how much of that immense difference, between those who listened with delight to the eloquence of the discourses and appreciated the instruction they gave, and those who purchased the moral venom to satisfy the cravings of a natural appetite, to which no entertainment of better things had ever been offered ;—how much of this immense difference was perfectly within the power, and therefore within the responsibility of society. Surely such taste, and such books at once to gratify and aggravate it, are not the means wherewith the children in a free government, and of a Christian people, are to lay the ever-during foundations of conduct and character.

The statistics of the other class of institutions, which have the same general object in view as public libraries, viz. Mechanics' Institutes, either with or without reading-rooms, and Lyceums or associations under any name, before which courses of Popular Lectures have been delivered, are as follows ;—the statements referring to the year preceding July, 1839.

SUFFOLK COUNTY.

Number of courses of Lectures on literary or scientific subjects, delivered before Lyceums, Literary Societies or associations, during the year preceding July 1, 1839,	.	.	26
Average No. of attendants,	.	.	13,448
Expenses for lectures, including incidental,	.	.	\$11,434 00

The number of lectures, in the above courses, was three hundred and twenty-nine.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

75

In this computation, no notice is taken of any course which did not consist of as many as eight lectures. Short courses, such as those of Messrs. Catlin, Graham, Espy, &c., are not included. The large number of persons attending is to be accounted for by the fact, that the same persons, in some instances, attended two or more of the courses.

ESSEX COUNTY.

No. of Mechanics' Institutes,	.	.	.	.	3
No. of Members,	.	.	.	.	540
No. of Lyceums, &c.,	.	.	.	.	12
Average No. of attendants,	.	.	.	.	4,385
Expenses for lectures, including incidental,	.	.	.	.	\$2,751 00

MIDDLESEX COUNTY.

No. of Mechanics' Institutes,	.	.	.	.	2
No. of Members,	.	.	.	.	675
No of Lyceums, &c.	.	.	.	.	24
Average No. of attendants,	.	.	.	.	5,080
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	.	.	.	.	\$3,004 00

WORCESTER COUNTY.

No. of Mechanics' Institutes,	.	.	.	.	1
No. of Members,	.	.	.	.	64
No. of Lyceums, &c.	.	.	.	.	18
Average No. of attendants,	.	.	.	.	3,005
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	.	.	.	.	\$539 00

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY.

No. of Lyceums, &c.	.	.	.	.	3
Average No. of attendants,	.	.	.	.	635
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	.	.	.	.	\$75 00

HAMPDEN COUNTY.

No. of Mechanics' Institutes,	.	.	.	.	1
No. of Members,	.	.	.	.	60

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

No. of Lyceums, &c.	4
Average No. of attendants,	300
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	\$100 00

FRANKLIN COUNTY.

No. of Lyceums, &c.	5
Average No. of attendants,	450
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	\$32 00

BERKSHIRE COUNTY.

No. of Lyceums, &c.	10
Average No. of attendants,	1,065
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	\$136 00

NORFOLK COUNTY.

No. of Lyceums, &c.	13
Average No. of attendants,	1,355
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	\$1,146 00

BRISTOL COUNTY.

No. of Mechanics' Institutes,	1
No. of Members,	100
No. of Lyceums, &c.	6
Average No. of attendants,	1,060
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	\$1,455 00

PLYMOUTH COUNTY.

No. of Lyceums, &c.	7
Average No. of attendants,	805
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	\$327 00

BARNSTABLE COUNTY.

No. of Lyceums, &c.	5
Average No. of attendants,	570
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	\$73 00

DUKES' COUNTY.

No. of Lyceums, &c.	.	.	.	.	3
Average No. of attendants,	.	.	.	.	140
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	.	.	.	.	\$25 00

NANTUCKET COUNTY.

No. of Lyceums, &c.	.	.	.	.	1
Average No. of attendants,	.	.	.	.	400
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	.	.	.	.	\$100 00

 RECAPITULATION.

No. of Mechanics' Institutes,	.	.	.	.	8
No. of Members,	.	.	.	.	1,439
No. of Lyceums, &c.	.	.	.	.	137
Average No. of attendants,	.	.	.	.	32,698
Expenses for Lectures, including incidental,	.	.	.	.	\$20,197 00

In addition to the above, there are many societies existing in the State, under the names of Lyceums, Debating Clubs, Ciceronian Associations, &c. whose members are aiming at self-improvement, by debating, declamation, reading, composition, &c. &c. Before these, lectures are sometimes, though rarely, delivered. When I have been led to suppose, that the number of lectures has not been as many as five or six for the year, I have not included them in the computation. Owing to occasional vagueness or uncertainty in the answers, I may sometimes have been led into a mistake ; but it is believed, that the above result approximates very nearly to the truth. In most country towns, little account is made of incidental expenses. They consist mainly of fuel and lights, which are often contributed by the attendants.

Occasional lectures, or short courses, on the subjects of Peace, Temperance, Abolition, &c. have in no case been included in the above list.

The professed object of these lectures, is the instruction or amusement of persons, who already possess a considerable fund of information, and some maturity of mind. The lecturers seldom deal with rudiments, but suppose their hearers to possess a knowledge of these already. They explain, more in detail, some subject, with which the audience is presumed to have a general acquaintance ; they elucidate some obscure point in history ; or sketch an outline character of some celebrated man ; or present a bird's-eye view of some particular age or people. Occasionally, the lectures are grave and didactic discussions of an important point in philosophy or morals. Some persons attend these lectures, in the true spirit of philosophical inquiry ; others resort to them, as places of amusement for a leisure hour ; some attend them, in order to dignify a life of idleness, with a seeming mental occupation, and others, again, attend them, as they would attend a theatre, or other assembly, where the supposed refinement of the company and not the instructiveness of the occasion, constitutes the attraction. From the nature and object of these institutions, therefore, and from the expectations of those by whom they are sustained, it is obvious that they are neither designed nor adapted for juvenile improvement. To those who are about to cross the loosely-defined line, which separates youth from manhood, these lectures may, to some extent, be interesting and useful. But, however useful they may be, they can never be a substitute for books, even for the youth, and, in no respect can they be so, for children. Even as it regards adults, it is very clear, that, without collateral reading and inquiry, out of the lecture-room, they can obtain only very partial and fragmentary, instead of thorough and methodical knowledge on any subject ; and they will be in no little danger of acquiring superficial, instead of sound views, and of amassing facts merely, instead of penetrating to principles. It is because of this tendency to superficiality,—to make men mistake a few ideas for a system of truth, and twilight for sunshine,—that the whole scheme of Popular Lectures encounters strong opposition from some intelligent men. Their hostility, however, seems too indiscriminate. Although thoroughness and depth of knowledge always possess an immeasurable superiority over mere sketches or outline views ; yet, on subjects, aside and apart from our immediate employment or profession, the most learned

not only may, but must be content, with general notions and a passing acquaintance. It is with the different branches of knowledge, as with the different individuals in society ; we must know thoroughly those with whom we have daily dealings and intercourse, while a power of ready recognition is sufficient for the rest. It is only when the knowledge pertains to our immediate business or avocation, whatever that may be, that dim and floating notions become, not simply useless, but ruinous. Those who object to enlightening the mass of the people in all ways and to any extent, because they must finally stop short of accomplishment and mastership in their attainments, would do well to reflect upon the amount of things, which the most learned man upon earth knows, compared with the amount of which he is ignorant. With regard to many of the laws and operations of nature, going on immediately around us, the keenest vision has not yet penetrated film-deep. All knowledge, even the least, of the constitution of things or of the course of nature, is good and valuable, as far as it extends, provided only, that the possessor knows how little way it does extend.

But it seems undeniable, that the Lyceum class of institutions confers benefits both of a negative and positive character. They win both adults and youth from places, where time would otherwise be misspent, or worse than misspent. They originate acquaintances between persons, who would otherwise remain ignorant of each other, and thus they cultivate social feelings, prevent prejudices from springing up in the mind, and often detach prejudices from it. They supply better topics, and elevate the tone of conversation, and thereby expel from the domestic and the social circle vast quantities of censoriousness, obloquy, and sarcasm against neighbors and townsmen, which, though not legally slanderous, and therefore not subject to legal animadversion, are yet only one grade below technical slander, and make abundant amends in quantity for any deficiency in degree. It has been often repeated by numerous and accurate observers, that in the city of Boston, the general topics of conversation, and the mode of treating them, have been decidedly improved, since what may be called the reign of Popular Lectures.

From the point of view, then, whence I consider them, this kind of institutions possesses great importance ; for, although the children

are now incapable of deriving much direct benefit from it, yet, every passing year is carrying thousands of them within the sphere of its helpful influences.

One fact, almost universal respecting these lectures, is too important to be omitted. Strictly speaking, they are not *courses* ; that is, they are not a connected series ; they do not take up particular subjects, and treat them in such a full, methodical manner, as to make every part of them pervious to the sight of the attendants. On the contrary, the topics discussed are almost as numerous as the lectures. Chance and accident, not order and coherence, determine their succession. The relation between successive lectures is that of contrariety, as often as of resemblance. If bound together, at the end of the course, the series would be not merely miscellaneous, but heterogeneous. The only circumstance of unity between them would be, that they had been delivered on the same evening in the week. The least that can be said of this is, that it does not tend to cultivate a habit of systematic inquiry, or of order in intellectual pursuits. Probably it would be more just to say, that in this way,—especially if the auditors do not follow out the subjects discussed by reflection and collateral reading,—though something may be gained in expansion of knowledge, little will be realized in depth ; that habits of glimpse-catching will be formed, which lead to shallowness, rather than such habits of penetrating and clasping a subject as characterize philosophy. The divergencies into these two paths, may at first seem almost imperceptible ; but their terminations are as wide asunder as wisdom and folly. A vagrant, wonder-hunting mind is as incompatible with sound knowledge and practical good sense, as vagrant habits of life are with thrift and competency. But it is to be hoped that this class of institutions, as well as the public taste which sustains it, is now in a transition state, and that, when it is fully established as one of the media for diffusing intelligence, higher counsels will preside over its management ; and that, at least in regard to all the more important classes of subjects, a regular union of parts into a perfect whole, will succeed to a confusing and dissipating variety.

In addition to lectures before regularly established Lyceums or associations, there is a class of itinerant lecturers, perpetually traversing the country, and professing to expound, in three or four lec-

tures, or sometimes even in a single lecture, the principles of Chemistry, Electricity, Astronomy, or History. A lover of good learning, or any one who has any comprehension of these great subjects, has little to hope from these sources. In one or two chemical lectures, a man may exhibit a little of the flash and glare of the experimental part of the science ; he may change the color of a fluid,—turning a vegetable blue into red, and the red again, into a blue, by the infusion of an acid and an alkali ; but what idea can he convey of the endlessly diversified combinations from simple substances, that make up all the treasures of the earth ; or, of the ever active agencies by which those substances are passing from one combination to another for the benefit of man. And so of Astronomy. What loss do the infinite glory and magnificence of the Creator's works suffer, when vilified by such representations !

Respecting periodicals, newspapers, and occasional printed discourses and addresses, I have no information, not conveniently accessible to any one. In regard to the productions of the daily and periodical press, it may be said, that books cannot be a substitute for them, nor they a substitute for books. They suppose the pre-existence of an extensive and solid frame-work of knowledge in the reader ; and where this exists they furnish valuable materials of fact and opinion to be wrought into it ; but without the pre-existing frame-work, these materials will be mainly lost. Besides, without a power in the reader to sift, examine, compare, and decide for himself, they may be sources of error, as well as of truth.

After adverting to one more subject, I shall have referred to the principal means, now in existence, for the exercise of the intellect and the formation of the character of the whole of the rising generation. The sincere and anxious concern, which has been manifested for the religious education of our children, and the money and time expended for that purpose, in one department of labor, are to be mentioned as the highest eulogium upon the people of the State. The manifestations of this desire are every where to be seen. It has not stopped with words, but has proceeded to deeds. In this Commonwealth, in which the number of churches is larger, in proportion to the population, than in any other State or country in the world, there are, comparatively, but few religious societies, which

have not gathered a Sabbath School, and procured a Sabbath School Library for it. The number of volumes in the Sabbath School Libraries, of one denomination alone, is more than one hundred thousand,—and of another denomination, about fifty thousand. It has been estimated by good judges, that the number of volumes of Sabbath School books, sold in the State and for the use of the children in the State, during the last twelve months, is, about one hundred and fifty thousand. The direct aim of the mass of these books, is to inculcate doctrinal knowledge, and to awaken a spirit of piety in the minds of the young. Through the instrumentality of Bible Societies, by whose agency a Bible or Testament has been placed in the hands of destitute families, and also by the circulation of Tracts, a fund of reading, on the paramount subject of religion, is furnished to the children of the State. Another pertinent consideration is, that societies are already organized and in active operation, whose sole object it is to increase and to supply the demand for religious books.

But, while all will agree, that religious instruction,—properly so called,—is the highest desideratum in the education of children; there will also be an equal unanimity of opinion, that there are other subjects, embracing the wide range of all those duties and interests, which are denominated domestic, social, economical, political, literary and scientific, which demand the attention and fostering care of every parent, and of every government, claiming to be in any degree parental.

With an aggregate, then, of about one hundred and eighty thousand volumes, in all the Town and Social Libraries in the State, (or only one hundred thousand out of the city of Boston,) to which only one hundred thousand persons have a right of access;—or, (which is the important point,) to which more than six hundred thousand persons have no right of access;—with a proportion of at least nineteen twentieths of these volumes, confessedly ill adapted to the wants of children; with but about fifty school libraries; with the fact, that, from the very conditions of their existence, our people must obtain their information, mainly, from reading, or must live and die in ignorance;—the great question arises, whether any further means are necessary to promote the intelligence and encourage the self-culture of the rising generation. On this topic, I wish to submit a few considerations.

Libraries have been less frequently founded within the last twenty years, than for the twenty years before ; so that there are very few collections of which the basis consists of the better modern works. Though reading has increased within the period, first named, it has been more desultory than it formerly was.

Such libraries as do exist, are, almost without exception, located in the centre of the town, and several miles from the remotest inhabitants, so that the inconvenience of going for a book, often decides the question in favor of idleness, or of some useless sport, without one ;—when, could a book be procured in half an hour or an hour, to be read during the residue of an afternoon or an evening, it would not fail to be done. Such fragments of time may seem small, and, individually considered, they are so,—but, in the course of fifteen or twenty years, they amount to months, perhaps, to years ;—or rather they amount to the whole difference between a richly-furnished, and a poverty-stricken mind.

Most of the Social Libraries are encumbered with an admission fee or annual tax, which prevents many people from owning a share in them ; and it furnishes the strongest grounds of exclusion to the poorest people, who have most need of their benefits.

The fact of the existence of so many Sabbath School Libraries, adds another to the reasons for having libraries on other subjects ; so that the religious feeling, when inspired, may find collateral and subsidiary arguments in the religious aspects of science, and be supplied with new evidence and illustrations, from every object on which the eye can rest in the amplitude of nature. No one, for instance, can ever appreciate the argument of the celebrated work of Bishop Butler, who knows nothing of the course of human events, or of the laws which govern the external world. Besides, there is no doubt that, out of a wide variety of subjects, some one would excite a taste for reading in many young minds, which might afterwards be turned to the reading of serious books, when, without some such propitious influence, it would be almost hopeless to attempt its formation.

Of the blessings that would flow from establishing libraries, in places convenient and central for all the children in the State, to radiate light and warmth upon all their intellects and all their hearts, no adequate conception can be formed by any finite mind. Years of

time,—and if we look at all the tens of thousands of children in the State, the aggregate will amount to centuries,—would be redeemed from sloth, from a waste of the all-precious hours of youth, in volatile amusements, in the gratification of appetite, or in fashionable dissipation ;—a devotion to which is never found in conjunction with habits of reflection, with usefulness, with sound practical views on the most important subjects of life,—for the laws of nature have disjoined them, and placed them in opposition to each other, as the East is to the West. Although in education, the harvest necessarily comes long after the seed-time, yet there are few parents now living, who would not see its promise and taste its fruits. An aged and most intelligent and respectable gentleman, in the interior of the State, in giving me an account of a well selected library of only a hundred and fifty volumes, formed in the year 1812, “for youth in their minority,” says, “Its influence in the formation of more than two hundred youth, never can be appreciated. Its weight in the purest gold, distributed among the same youth, would have been but dross, in comparison with the library, even if no other world but the present, is respected. The books are, literally, *used up*. The remnant, worth but ten dollars.”

How few parents there are, who, in looking back to the days of their own childhood and minority, find no occasion to lament,—now when the injury is irreparable,—the want of early opportunities for laying up a store of valuable knowledge ; and the loss of time,—now irrecoverable,—consequent upon that want ! How many feel, daily, that their power of thinking, and especially of expressing their thoughts in speech or in writing, has, all their life long, been obstructed and deadened, from an absence of facilities for information and of incitements to study, in early life. For the parents themselves, these regrets come too late. The losses belong to a class, for which even repentance brings no remedy. And the question is, whether these same parents shall suffer their own children to grow up under a similar privation, to be doomed, in their turn, when they become men and women, to the same melancholy retrospect and to the same unavailing regrets.

The people of this State, are, and must, of necessity, continue to be an *industrious* people, or they cannot subsist. Wealthy, as the

State is justly supposed to be, yet, if all the property in it, both real and personal, were equally divided amongst all its inhabitants, it would not amount to more than four hundred dollars apiece. How soon would all this be gone, even to the very soil we tread on, without the annual replenishings of industry. Our soil furnishes nothing of spontaneous growth, and its unrelenting ruggedness can be propitiated only by the offerings of industry. Our people, therefore, as a people, cannot go abroad for information,—for that enlargement of mind and that acquaintance with affairs, which comes from foreign travel, when pursued with an inquiring spirit and an open eye. If the necessity of their condition debars them from visiting other States or countries in quest of knowledge, then knowledge must be brought to them,—to their own doors and fire-sides,—or ignorance is the only alternative,—the ignorance of childhood, darkening into the deeper ignorance of manhood, with all its jealousies and its narrow-mindedness, and its superstitions, and its penury of enjoyments,—poor, amid the intellectual and moral riches of the universe, blind in the splendid temple, which God has builded, and famishing amid the profusions of Omnipotence. The minds, then, of our people, should travel, though their bodies remain at home ; and for these journeyings and voyages, books are an ever-ready and costless vehicle.

With a rugged and unproductive soil, Massachusetts is also by far the most densely populated State in the Union. Hence, for the temporal and material prosperity of her people—for their subsistence even—they are obliged to form an alliance with the great agencies of nature, as auxiliaries in their labor. But nature bestows her mighty forces of wind, and water, and steam, only upon those who seek them through intelligence and skill. The same circumstances, therefore, which seem to have marked out this State as a place of great mechanical, manufacturing and commercial industry, draw after them the necessity of such a wide range of knowledge, as, though always valuable, would not otherwise be so indispensable. To fit the people for prosecuting these various branches of business with success—or even to rescue them from making shipwreck of their fortunes—they must become acquainted with those mechanical laws that pervade the material world. They must become intelligent machinists, millwrights, shipwrights, engineers—not craftsmen merely, but men

who understand the principles upon which their work proceeds ; so that, by the skilful preparation and adjustment of machinery, the sleepless and gigantic forces of nature, may perform their tasks. They must know the nature and action of the elements. They must know the properties of the bodies used in their respective branches of business, and the processes by which rude materials can most cheaply be converted into polished fabrics. They must know the countries whence foreign products are imported, whither domestic products are exported, the course of trade, the laws of demand and supply, what articles depend on the permanent wants of mankind, and therefore will always be in demand, and what depend upon caprice or fashion, and therefore are certain to be discarded soon, for the very reason that they are now in vogue. Now, all these lead out, by imperceptible steps, into mechanical philosophy, the applications of science to the useful arts, civil geography, navigation, commerce, political economy, and the relations which nations bear to each other. Although an individual might learn to perform a task or execute an agency in one of these departments, empirically, that is, by a knowledge of the modes of proceeding, but in ignorance of the principles on which the process depends, yet such individuals never originate improvements or inventions. Like the Chinese, the end of a hundred years, or of a hundred generations, finds them in the spot they occupied at the beginning.

Of those engaged in agriculture,—an interest, intrinsically important and elevated—it may be said, that just in proportion as the soils they cultivate, are more sterile, should the minds of the cultivators be more fertile ; for, in a series of years, the quantity of the harvests depends quite as much upon the knowledge and skill of the cultivator, as upon the richness of the soil he tills. Take the year round, and the farmer has as many leisure hours as any class of men ; and he has this advantage over many others, that his common round of occupations does not engross all his powers of thought, so that, were his mind previously supplied with a fund of facts, he might be meditating as he works, and growing wiser and richer together.

In fine, there is not, and the constitution of things has made it impossible that there should be, any occupation or employment whatever, where an extended knowledge of its principles, or of its

kindred departments, would not improve products, abridge processes, diminish cost, and impart dignity to the pursuit.

And how without books, as the grand means of intellectual cultivation, are the daughters of the State to obtain that knowledge on a thousand subjects, which is so desirable in the character of a female, as well as so essential to the discharge of the duties to which she is destined? Young men, it may be said, have a larger circle of action; they can mingle more in promiscuous society,—at least, they have a far wider range of business occupations,—all of which stimulate thought, suggest inquiry and furnish means for improvement. But the sphere of females is domestic. Their life is comparatively secluded. The proper delicacy of the sex forbids them from appearing in the promiscuous marts of business, and even from mingling, as actors, in those less boisterous arenas, where mind is the acting agent, as well as the object to be acted upon. If then, she is precluded from these sources of information, and these incitements to inquiry; if, by the unanimous and universal opinion of civilized nations, when she breaks away from comparative seclusion and retirement, she leaves her charms behind her; and if, at the same time she is debarred from access to books, by what means, through what channels, is she to obtain the knowledge so indispensable for the fit discharge of maternal and domestic duties, and for rendering herself an enlightened companion for intelligent men? Without books, except in cases of extraordinary natural endowment, she will be doomed to relative ignorance and incapacity. Nor can her daughters, in their turn, escape the same fate; for their minds will be weakened by the threefold cause of transmission, inculcation, and example. Steady results follow from steady causes;—under such influences, therefore, if not averted, the generations must deteriorate from the positive to the superlative in mental feebleness and imbecility.

But far above and beyond all special qualifications for special pursuits, is the importance of forming to usefulness and honor, the capacities which are common to all mankind. The endowments that belong to all, are of far greater consequence than the peculiarities of any. The practical farmer, the ingenious mechanic, the talented artist, the upright legislator or judge, the accomplished teacher, should be only modifications or varieties of the original *man*. The man is the trunk; occupations and professions are only

different qualities of the fruit it should yield. There are more of the same things to be taught to all, and learned by all, than there are of different things to be imparted, distributively, to classes consisting of a few. The development of the common nature ; the cultivation of the germs of intelligence, uprightness, benevolence, truth, that belong to all ;—these are the principal, the aim, the end,—while special preparations for the field or the shop, for the forum or the desk, for the land or the sea, are but incidents.

In the first place, it is requisite that every man, considered merely as a man, and without reference to station or occupation, should know something of his own bodily structure and organization, of whose marvellous workmanship it is said, that it is fearfully and wonderfully made,—*wonderfully*, because the infinite wisdom and skill, manifested in the adjustment and expansion of his frame, tend to inspire the mind with devotion and a religious awe ;—and *fearfully*, because its exquisite mechanism is so constantly exposed to peril and destruction, from all the objects and elements around him, that precaution or fear is the hourly condition of his existence.

Did each individual know,—what, with a few suitable books he might easily learn,—on what observances and conditions the Creator of the body has made its health and strength to depend ;—did he know that his corporeal frame is a general system, made up by the union of many particular systems,—the nervous, the muscular, the bony, the arterial, the venous, the pulmonary, the digestive,—that all these bear certain fixed relations to each other, and to the objects and elements of the external world ;—it is inconceivable, how much of disease and pain and premature death would be averted,—from how much imposition he would be saved, and how much the powers of useful labor, and the common length of life would be increased. Even from the extension of knowledge on these subjects within the last century, the average length of life has increased one quarter ; and yet it now reaches to but little more than half of threescore years and ten. How many persons, annually, are killed by the carbonic gas of burning charcoal, when, did they know of its existence, or how it is formed, they would as soon swallow arsenic, as inhale it ! How much property is annually destroyed by spontaneous combustion, through an ignorance of the circumstances that cause it !

What a population of spectres, and ghosts, and apparitions has been driven from the abodes of all intelligent men, and might be annihilated with regard to all mankind, by a knowledge of the reflection and refraction of light, and of a few other simple laws of nature ! Those terrific races, that once swarmed the earth, have ceased their visits, where a few of those principles of science are understood, which every child, if supplied with the means, might easily learn. How pertinaciously have the most diffusive blessings been resisted,—such as the use of lightning conductors, and vaccination,—because devout, but ignorant people supposed, that to ward off death, when it came under violent forms, was an impious defiance of the will of Heaven ;—as though it were not the primary will of Heaven that we should use the means of self-preservation, which it has graciously given us. It is not long since, that in one of our most intelligent cities, a splendid granite church took fire, and when it was found impossible to extinguish the flames in its interior, the chief-engineer forbade the engine-men to play upon the walls, because he well knew, that water thrown upon heated granite would decompose it, and he wished to save the materials ; but hundreds of others, ignorant of this fact, but only knowing that the engineer belonged to a different religious denomination from the worshippers at the church, attributed the prohibition to his spite against an opposing sect of Christians ; and while he took the measure which alone could save the property, they supposed he was maliciously delighting himself with the sight of its destruction. In Scotland, during the last century, the introduction of mills for winnowing grain, was violently opposed. The whole argument took a theological cast. It was urged on one side, that the use of a winnowing mill, was a resistance of the Divine will, because it prevented the wind from “blowing where it listeth.” But on the other side, it was gravely answered, that to prevent the wind from “blowing where it listeth,” only contravened the will of the “Prince of the power of the air,” and was, therefore, not only lawful but laudable. Profit and convenience coming to the support of the latter argument, it prevailed. These are specimens, only of the most gross and sottish ignorance. Its less palpable forms are indefinitely more numerous, and their consequences, in the aggregate, indefinitely more disastrous. Let any one read such a work as that

of Dick "On the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge," and he will be able to form some idea, how intimately the private, personal happiness of a people is connected with its intelligence.

But these illustrations are endless. The real fact to be pondered is, that without diffusing information amongst the people, we shall go on in the same way, smiling at the follies of the last generation, and furnishing anecdotes for the next. There are innumerable ways, in which a knowledge of the material world would gladden the obscurest dwelling in the land, and disburden the heart of the humblest individual, of fears, anxieties and sorrows. There are innumerable ways, in which an instructed and enlightened man turns the course of nature to his profit, and delight, and daily comfort, which an ignorant man would no more think of, than a savage would think of burning anthracite coal in the winter, to warm him, and of preserving ice over summer, to cool him.

All children might learn something of Natural History. This department presents an immense variety of objects, calculated to develop their observing and comparing faculties, at a period of life when these faculties are more active than ever afterwards, and to store the mind with an abundance of materials, for the judging and reasoning powers to act upon. To portions of this class of objects, divines and moralists are perpetually referring, in order to illustrate the power, and wisdom, and perfections of God; and yet, how nearly lost are all such illustrations upon minds that know nothing of those laws of vegetable life, which clothe "the lilies of the field" in a beauty beyond the regal glory of Solomon,—nor of that animal mechanism that saves the "sparrow" from falling.

The biography of great and good men, is one of the most efficient of all influences in forming the character of children; for as they are prone to imitate what they admire, it unconsciously directs, while it delights them. Let the mind be supplied with definite, exact ideas, on any subject, and we all know by experience, that when an analogous case arises, the related ideas with which we were familiar before, will instantaneously spring up in the mind, by the law of association. And when correct ideas present themselves spontaneously in this way, they are, to say the least, far more likely to be embodied in action, than if they had first to be laboriously

sought out. Especially is this true in emergencies ; and how many of the follies and imprudences of men are first committed on emergencies, so sudden as to exclude reflection. On such occasions, to have prototypes of moral excellence in the mind, is something like having precedents or examples, in the practical concerns or business of life. Although it is a great truth, that all minds have the capacity of distinguishing between right and wrong, yet life presents innumerable instances where the application of these principles is attended with serious difficulty ;—in such cases, mere ignorance is always the source of error, and often of ruin. And how many excellent men have lived, how many illustrious examples have been set, of which only a very few of the more favored children of this State have ever heard ;—all others, therefore, being not so much as invited to follow in the same radiant paths. Why should the examples of benevolence, of probity, of devotion to truth, be lost to so many of our children, whom they might fire with a corresponding love of excellence ! Here are real examples of real men, and are, therefore, possible and imitable ; and to the unsophisticated mind of a child, there is as great a difference between real and fictitious personages, as there is to a merchant, between real and fictitious paper. There never was such an argument, in favor of furnishing biographical and scientific truth for children, and against that mass of fictions which are given them, for true stories and not as media or illustrations merely, as the simple question, which ingenuous children so often ask, when reading or hearing a narrative, *Is it true ?* It ought to be remembered, that in all the objects and operations of nature, and in the lives of genuine men, we converse with God and with the course of his providence, *at first hand*, and not with mock-shows, and counterfeits, and hearsays.

There is another kind of reading, which all must admit to be of the very highest importance to our citizens, and of which they are almost universally ignorant ;—I mean our ante-revolutionary history. Few, even of our educated men, can claim any familiarity with it ; yet there, our free institutions germinated. Never, in any other place, nor at any other time, have the great principles of civil and religious liberty been so ably discussed, or been sustained by such heroic trials and sacrifices, as between the first colonization of this country

and the peace of 1783. Our country's independence—the birth of a free people—one of the greatest epochs in the history of the human race—was the result. Every boy, who is not ruined by a false course of instruction, passes through a state of mind, between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one, when a study of the principles and deeds, recorded in that history, would give him some adequate idea what Liberty and Law are, what they have cost, and what they are worth.

But, when we turn from the outward and material world to the inward and spiritual life, a wider field for improvement opens before us;—for, out of the invisible recesses of the mind, come all the mighty changes wrought by human power. When an uninstructed person looks upon the outward form of a man, he thinks nothing of the skilfully adjusted organs, nor of the mysterious functions of vitality, within it. The vibrating nerves, which convey sensation and volition, the contracting muscle, the flowing blood, the health and strength giving processes of nutrition, the dilating lungs, with their adaptations to each other, are all hidden from his untaught gaze. So, when an ignorant man regards the operations of the mind, he discerns only a tumultuary, conflicting tide of wishes and terrors, of pleasures and pains, of doubts and purposes, rising, contending, and subsiding, without order or law. He takes no cognizance of the different powers and faculties with which he has been endowed, of their relative supremacy, of their different spheres of action, nor of their adaptations to his temporal condition; and hence, when he obeys their impulses, it is without the approval of conscience, and when he commands them, it is without the discriminations of reason. Every child, towards the close of his minority, has time and capacity enough, could he be furnished with the means, to acquire much of the knowledge, enjoined in that ancient precept, so universally celebrated and sanctioned, “Know thyself.”

But after all, those blessings of knowledge combined with well directed feelings, which cannot be enumerated, are infinitely more than any language can express. The greater proportion of the stream of every man's life is hidden in the silent breast, and never emerges into utterance or action. Much as any one may be in the company of the world, he is much more in the company of his own

consciousness only. It is the perpetual inflowing of his secret reflections and emotions that mingles sweet or bitter waters in the stream of every man's existence. Whatever reaches the fountains of this stream, is, as far as possible, to be remembered, in plans for human amelioration. Few men have battles to fight, or senates to persuade, or kingdoms to rule ; but all have a spirit to be controlled, and to be brought into subjection to the social and divine law. The intellect forces the great problems of existence, and futurity, and destiny, upon all ; and none will question that much depends upon human means, whether a man shall go through the world and out of it, elated by delusive hopes, or tormented by causeless fears.

Among the agencies, that operate to these momentous ends, books, certainly, occupy a conspicuous place. Whoever has read modern biography, with a philosophic eye to the causes of the extraordinary characters it records, must have observed the frequent references, that are made to some *book*, as turning the stream of life, at some critical point in its course. In one of Dr. Franklin's letters, he says, that, when a boy, he met with a book entitled "Essays to do Good," which led to such a train of thinking, as had an influence on his conduct through life. Sir Walter Scott, in his writings and letters, makes repeated and repeated mention of the fact, that he owed his power of painting past times, to the books which he read when young. The notorious Stephen Burroughs, a native of a neighboring State, relates, in his autobiography, that he was inflamed with military ardor, by the perusal of "Guy, Earl of Warwick," that he ran away from his father, three times,—once before he was fourteen years of age,—and enlisted in a regiment of artillery. Twice he was reclaimed but, at last, he succeeded in escaping ; and, in the camp, it has been sometimes said, commenced his life of ignominy. Whoever looks deeper, sees that that ignominious life commenced when he was reading a pernicious book. It would be easy to fill pages with similar facts. "When I see a house," says Dr. Franklin, "well furnished with books and newspapers," (of course he meant instructive and not mere partisan ones,) "there I see intelligent and well informed children, but if there are no books nor papers, the children are ignorant, if not profligate." It has been frequently remarked by observing men, that towns, in which good libraries have

been established, show a population of intelligence, superior to that of towns where none has existed. In a number of towns, recent attempts to establish libraries for grown people have utterly failed. The men and women, not having acquired a taste for useful reading when children, have lost it for life. Let the same course be followed in regard to the present children, and time is not more certain to bring the day, when they shall be men and women, than it is to bring the same feelings of indifference towards mental improvement. On the other hand, I have never heard of a well selected library for children, which has failed from their want of interest in it.

And in what way, except by furnishing good libraries to the people at large, can the reading of frivolous and useless books, of novels of the baser sort, and of that contaminating and pestilential class of works, which is now hawked around the country, creating moral diseases, or inflaming and aggravating where it finds them, be prevented? These books, no law can destroy or reach. No power of persuasion can ever induce those who have acquired a love of reading them, to abandon what gives them pleasure, without some equivalent of pleasure is proffered in its stead. But a supply of good books would confer far more than an equivalent. It would prove a remedy, where the disease exists, and an antidote, where it threatens. Let good books be read, and the taste for reading bad ones will slough off from the minds of the young, like gangrened flesh from a healing wound. Nor will any severity of legislative enactment, nor any vigilance in the administration of the law, ever succeed in the extirpation of gaming, shows, circuses, theatres, and many low and gross forms of indulgence, without the introduction of some moral and intellectual substitutes.

For the purpose of carrying out a plan of improvement, co-extensive with the wants of the community, and with the limits of the State, no system can be devised at all comparable with the existing arrangement of school districts. Here are corporate bodies, known to the law, already organized and in operation. The schoolhouses are central points of minute subdivisions of territory, which, in the aggregate, embrace every inch of ground in the State. There are but few districts in the State, which comprise more than a space of two miles square. On an average, they include less than that extent

of territory. Here, then, are central points, at convenient distances, distributed with great uniformity all over the Commonwealth,—each one with a little group of children,—the hope and treasure of the State,—dependant upon it for all the means of public instruction, they are ever to enjoy. And these points, though now emitting so dim and feeble a light, may be made luminous and radiant, dispelling the darkness and filling the land with a glory, infinitely above regal splendor. Could the children, who are so widely scattered over the surface of the State,—laboring, even in their tender years, upon its hills and by its water-falls,—could they assemble, and present themselves before their rulers, and be, for a moment, endued with a vision of their coming fortunes, and speak of the life of toil to which most of them have been born, of their poverty in the means of self-cultivation, or, what is worse than poverty,—of their indifference to it ; could they proclaim, that every passing day is uttering the irreversible oracles of their fate, who could resist the appeal ! And can the thought of such an appeal penetrate the heart, with less electric swiftness, because they cannot make it !

Were any mode to be now devised or discovered, by which the soil of the State could be made to yield four-fold its present harvests, with no additional labor or expense ; or, by which, in some new mode of applying water or steam power, a given expenditure of time and money would return quadruple products in value or in quantity,—could there be found a dissenting voice, against its immediate adoption ? Yet, who will venture to say, that one fourth, or even one fortieth part of the mental and moral energies of our children is now put forth and expended in the wisest direction, or for the highest objects ? Were the earth beneath us found to be a rich magazine of mineral treasures, how speedily would the spirit of enterprise invest its capital and ply its enginery, in bringing those treasures to light, and in appropriating them to their respective uses ? Why a more contented wastefulness of moral resources, than of mineral wealth ? Were there wide tracts of the richest soils in the State unreclaimed, how soon would the hand of skillful husbandry enter and till them, and make them teem with luxuriant harvests ? Yet, in the obscurest corners of the land, along the by-ways, and under the humblest roofs, there is buried talent, and the suppressed power of ex-

tended and godlike benevolence. Could a library, containing popular, intelligible elucidations of the great subjects of art, of science, of duty, be carried home to all the children in the Commonwealth, it would be a magnet to reveal the varied elements of excellence, now hidden in their souls.

The State, in its sovereign capacity, has the deepest interest in this matter. If it would spread the means of intelligence and self-culture over its entire surface, making them diffusive as sunshine, causing them to penetrate into every hamlet and dwelling, and, like the vernal sun, quickening into life the seeds of usefulness and worth, wherever the prodigal hand of nature may have scattered them;—it would call into existence an order of men, who would establish a broader basis for its prosperity, and give a brighter lustre to its name,—who would improve its arts, impart wisdom to its counsels, and extend the beneficent sphere of its charities. Yet, not for its own sake only, should it assume this work. It is a corollary from the axioms of its constitution, that every child, born within its borders, shall be enlightened. In its paternal character, the government is bound, even to those who can make no requital. Sacredly is it bound to develop all the existing capacities, and to ensure the utmost attainable welfare, of that vast crowd and throng of men, who, without being known, during life, beyond their neighboring hills,—without leaving any enduring name behind them after death, still, by their life-long industry, fill up, as it were, drop by drop, the mighty stream of the country's prosperity. In the heart of this multitude, dwell capacities of good, and possibilities of evil, wholly transcending the power of finite imagination to conceive. Here are an inconceivable extent and magnitude of interests, sympathies, obligations;—here are all the great instincts of humanity, working out their way to a greater or less measure of good, according to the light they enjoy;—and, compared with this wide and deep mass of unrecorded life, all that emerges into history and is seen of man, is as nothing. To a superior being, to whom the world appears as it really is,—whose eye can see through it and round it,—the substance of its weal and woe, lies here; and ought not the means of knowledge, and the incitements and the aids to virtue, to be co-extensive with this vast expanse and depth of wants and responsibilities?

Again, it is believed that no barbarous nation has ever been known to history,—amongst whom any form of government had been established,—which had not adopted specific measures to educate the heir of sovereignty, for the discharge of his regal duties. And can the obligation to prepare for the responsibilities, attendant upon power, be less, where all the citizens, instead of one, are born to the inheritance of sovereignty. By our institutions, the political rights of the father descend to his sons, in course of law. But the intellectual and moral qualifications, necessary for the discreet use of those rights, are intransmissible, by virtue of any statute. These are personal, not hereditary ; and are, therefore, to be taught anew and learned anew, by each successive generation. Hence, as the work of education is never done, the means of education should never be withheld ;—as the former must be continually renewed, the latter must, as continually, be supplied.

The instruction and pleasure, which the parents themselves would experience, from the establishment of a good library in their respective districts, are too important to be forgotten, and yet are so obvious, as to need only a passing reference.

It seems to be the unanimous opinion of the teachers of all schools, whether public or private, that a School Library would be a most valuable auxiliary in interesting children in their studies. It would inspire the young with the desire to learn, that they might prepare themselves to enjoy what they saw was prized by others. Several of the rudimental studies could be invested, to the eye of the pupil, with new interest and usefulness by its means. If the facts or sentiments, contained in the reading lessons, could be illustrated or enlivened by some explanation or anecdote from the library, it would often convert a mechanical routine into a living exercise. If, when the scholars come to the name of Socrates, or Luther, or Howard, they could turn to a Biographical Dictionary, and find a summary of the lives and deeds of these men, and ascertain their place in chronology, and in geography, it would give a sense of reality to the business of the school, while, at the same time, it would acquaint them with important facts. And so, of ancient or foreign customs and manners, of memorable events, of remarkable phenomena in nature, &c. Pupils, who, in their reading, pass by names, references, allu-

sions, without searching, *at the time*, for the facts they imply, not only forego valuable information, which they may never afterwards acquire, but they contract a habit of being contented with ignorance. Under the influence of such a habit, the ardent desire for knowledge, which nature kindles in the breast of children, will soon be extinguished, and they will come to resemble the irrational creation, which passes, without thought or emotion, by objects of the greatest curiosity and wonder.

Again, access to some library seems indispensable, in all schools where any attention is paid to composition. The ability to express ideas in writing, with vigor and perspicuity, is now deemed so valuable, that, in many places, Composition has been added to the list of Common School studies. But the earlier exercises of children, in composing, (however it may be with the later,) can consist of little more than rendering other men's thoughts, in their own language. If the most distinguished authors desire to consult books before they attempt the discussion of great subjects, then, to require children to write composition, without supplying them with some resources, whence to draw their materials, is absurdly to suppose, not only, that they are masters of a select and appropriate diction, in which to clothe their thoughts and feelings, but also that they possess a degree of originality, which even the ablest writers do not claim.

For these and other reasons, some of the most judicious and successful teachers, have carried into school any little collection of books, belonging to themselves, and have realized great benefit from it. Such collections, however, must generally be scanty, and can rarely, if ever, be the most appropriate and useful ;—besides, such a practice is, at least, liable to misuse. But a well selected library, —such as that which is now in a course of preparation, under the auspices of the Board,—in which all possible respect is paid to the right of private judgment on questions, concerning which, an unhappy difference of opinion prevails amongst the best men in the community,—such a library would avoid all danger, and increase every benefit. Every legitimate excitement or encouragement, brought to bear upon our children in the schools, not only quickens progress, but diminishes the occasions for discipline.

Finally, from all I have heard and learned, it is my belief, that the

Legislature can do no one thing, which shall be so acceptable to the friends of Common School education in Massachusetts, as to devise some plan by which a school library shall be placed in every district school in the State. By the accomplishment of an object so permanently useful, they will win not only a sincere, but a lasting gratitude. Many of the districts are small, and without some assistance, they may not, for a long time, perhaps never, obtain a library by their own means. When we consider, that the average number of all the scholars, in all the public schools, is less than fifty for each ;—and, also, how many large schools there are in Boston and other cities, and in the central districts of large towns, we shall at once perceive how many small schools there must be. In the majority of instances, the small schools are in the exterior districts of the towns. They draw but little money, because of the small number of scholars which they contain. Hence, they have short schools, and seldom give large compensation to teachers. The fact, that the schools are small, proves that the lands of the district are not very fertile, and also, that it is not a place of much trade or business. Otherwise, the population would be denser and the schools larger. Their means, therefore, cannot be very abundant ; and hence, the necessity for assistance. There is another consideration which must have great weight with all, who desire, as far as is practicable, to furnish equivalents for natural disadvantages. The project of libraries for schools has lately been so much discussed, and has found such general favor with the public, that rich and populous school districts will not long remain without them. This class of large and wealthy districts have much the largest schools ; they are able to offer more liberal compensation to teachers, and if, in addition to these advantages, they possess libraries also, while the districts less favorably circumstanced in point of wealth and population, are destitute of them, the inequality of condition and privileges, already existing, will be still further increased. Every wellwisher of his kind will more cordially coöperate in measures which bring forward those who are in the rear, than with measures which carry still further onward those already in advance. Poverty ought never to be a bar against the attainment of that degree of knowledge, which is necessary for the intelligent performance of every duty in life.

After the munificent endowment by the State of two of its col-

leges, and many of its academies, it is thought that the time has arrived, when something should be done for the broader institution of the schools. Whatever claims may be made by the friends of colleges and academies in their behalf, they cannot deny that the Common School is still more important, because on this basis, the welfare of the whole people more immediately rests. When the State endowed its first university, and visited it, from time to time, for almost two centuries, with substantial proofs of its liberality, it surely did not mean to establish a law of primogeniture in its favor, and to disinherit the younger members of the family, that is, the Common Schools. It is expected, too, by the friends of the schools throughout the State, that those, who have received the benefits and enjoyed the honors of a university education,—which is claimed to exert a humanizing and liberalizing effect upon the mind and character,—will not themselves refute the claim, by a want of liberality towards the only institutions, where the masses can be benefited.

Amongst all the letters, which I have received on the subject of libraries, not one man, in his individual capacity, and but one board of school committee men only, has questioned their desirableness and utility. And the reason assigned in the latter case, was, that the town to which the committee belonged, already possessed a sufficient number of books, accessible to all its inhabitants. The conventions, held in the different counties, have approved and recommended the plan by votes, which, with two exceptions, had not a dissenting voice; and, in neither of the excepted cases, was there more than half a dozen negative votes. Probably so entire a unanimity would not be found to exist, on any other subject whatever.

In view of these facts and considerations, I cannot close this Report, without suggesting to the Board the expediency of inviting the special attention of the Legislature to this subject, as one which has an important bearing upon the welfare of the present age, and a bearing still more important upon the welfare of coming generations.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

BOSTON, DEC. 26, 1839.

ERRATUM.

Page 77, in the Recapitulation, Expenses for Lectures, &c., instead of \$20,197 00 read \$21,197 00.

FOURTH
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
Massachusetts.
BOARD OF EDUCATION,

TOGETHER WITH THE
FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE
SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

Boston:
DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS.

.....
1841.

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The Board of Education of this Commonwealth, in discharge of the duty required of them by law, submit this their Annual Report.

THE great interests of Education towards which their attention is directed, are not of such a nature as to admit, except under extraordinary circumstances, of marked and sudden changes. The lapse of a single year hardly allows us to expect such a progress as can be distinctly demonstrated in the general condition of the Education of our youth, without examination of the particulars of that condition; and it is a just cause of congratulation if upon such examination, we may be sure that we are making progress, for the immensity of the results aimed at, will amply justify long continued and patient effort, cheered with the prospect of ultimate success. The Board have the satisfaction of reporting that they cannot doubt that the cause of Education has materially advanced during the past year.

The intention of the Legislature to provide for the special education of candidates for the profession of teaching, has been, to a considerable extent, carried into effect. There are now three Normal Schools in operation, under the auspices of the Commonwealth, one located at Lexington, another at Barre, and the third at Bridgewater; the first, under the care of Cyrus Peirce, Esq.; the second, under that of Rev. Samuel P. Newman, and the last, of Col. Nicholas Tillinghast. In the utility

and success of Normal Schools, all who have been acquainted with the course of these institutions, feel an increased confidence.

In these schools, the mode of instruction is skilfully adapted to discipline the faculties of the pupils, to communicate information, and teach them how best to perform the same offices for others. Females only are admitted at Lexington, and none for a term less than one year. Both sexes are taught at Bridgewater and Barre, and received for shorter periods. On this account, there are fewer pupils at the Normal School at Lexington, which commenced on the 3d day of July, 1839. The number of pupils was at first but small, but it has been constantly, though very gradually increasing. August 11, 1840, the first Academic year closed with twenty-five pupils. The term which has just ended, was closed on the 22d of December last, with thirty-four pupils. And the number for the present term, which commenced on the 6th of January inst., will not probably vary materially from the last, though it is somewhat larger, and will probably be further increased. This school has been in operation about eighteen months. The interest and devotion to the purpose for which the institution was established, have been very gratifying during the whole period, and at no time more so than at present. The progress of the pupils generally in those branches of knowledge required to be taught in our schools, has been in the highest degree flattering, and the clearness and exactness of their information will be of great advantage to them in their professional duties hereafter. In the principles and practice of the art of teaching also, they have made quite as rapid proficiency, as any judicious friend of the system could have anticipated. The model or experimental school connected with this institution, sustains a high reputation among the people of the vicinity, and has proved to be of essential service in familiarizing the intended teachers with the practical working of the lessons of the Normal School.

Several pupils of this institution have been employed as teachers, since completing their studies there. Their success

has been for the most part remarkable, and acknowledged to be such by all who have had opportunities of observing their schools.

The experiment of a special education for the business of teaching, if that can be called an experiment which has been approved by an extensive experience of more than half a century, is satisfactory, so far as its results can yet be judged of, at Lexington ; and this school being the oldest of the three established in the Commonwealth, its history is on that account the more important, and has deserved a more particular examination.

The Normal School at Barre, commenced in September, 1839, and has continued for four terms. The average number of pupils during the whole period, has been a little more than forty. During the last term there were forty-seven ; twenty-six males, and twenty-one females. Of the whole number who have attended thus far, about half have attended for a single term only ; most of the remainder have continued for two terms.

The scholars who have left this school, have sustained a high reputation in their profession as teachers. They appear to be decidedly better qualified for their task, both by their thorough acquaintance with the elementary branches of learning and their familiarity with the principles and practice of the art of teaching, than the majority of those generally employed in the care of schools. Several of them have been eminently successful, and, on the whole, the experiment at Barre has thus far, to say the least, fully met the reasonable expectations of its friends.

The Normal School at Bridgewater, commenced on the 10th of September, 1840, and has just entered on its second term. The school opened with twenty-eight pupils, of whom twenty-one were females. At the present term, there are thirty-five scholars, of whom twenty-six are females. The condition of this school is excellent, and there is no reason to doubt that it will be equally efficient with the others in the preparation of

teachers to improve and reform the whole common school education of the Commonwealth.

The Board have reason to be fully satisfied with the manner in which Messrs. Peirce, Newman and Tillinghast have discharged their arduous and important duties. They have devoted themselves with indefatigable zeal to the work, and were happily fitted to carry it on in the most eligible course.

The publication of the School Library has been continued, and the volumes deserve high commendation. The great State of New York, with a policy no less wise than generous, has appropriated fifty-five thousand dollars a year, to furnish every school district in that State with a library. The same sum is to be added from local taxes, and this appropriation is to continue for five years.

The suggestions of the Secretary's Annual Report herewith communicated, are recommended to the serious attention of the members of the Legislature.

JOHN DAVIS,
GEO. HULL,
GEO. PUTNAM,
R. RANTOUL, JR.,
CHARLES HUDSON,
WM. G. BATES,
JOHN W. JAMES.

Boston, Jan. 20. 1841.

FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN :—

In this, my Fourth Annual Report, I respectfully submit to you such further information respecting the condition of the schools and the means of Popular Education, in the State, as the labors of another year have enabled me to obtain.

My usual routine of duties has included an extensive correspondence, in relation to the schools, an attendance upon County Common-School Conventions, and the preparation of the Annual Abstract of the School Returns. I have also performed, according to the best of my ability, such additional services as the Board has requested, although not enumerated among my legal or official duties.

The County Conventions, with three or four gratifying exceptions, have not been numerously attended. This result, it is believed, is principally attributable to the fact, that they were held in the months of August, September and October last, during the prevalence of an unprecedented political excitement. Such limited attendance on the Conventions is a subject of regret, because, on a broad survey of the State, it is already perceptible that the schools have profited most and are doing best, in those towns, whose parents, teachers and school committees have most regularly attended them. The explanation of this fact is obvious. The discussions and proceedings of the Conventions, elicit and communicate new views and ideas on the subject of education, and inspire the members with a more generous ardor in this noble cause. On returning home, therefore, they enter upon the work of improvement with increased zeal, and turn their knowledge to practical account for the benefit of the schools.

While, however, I have had occasion to regret the limited attendance on the Conventions, it has been a source of great gratification to find, that notwithstanding the height to which the voice of party contest arose, outside of the walls where we met, not a whisper, nor a breath of it, was heard within them. Devoting my whole time

and strength to the furtherance of this one object, and rigidly abstaining from all public action, respecting the controverted topics of the day, it has afforded me unmingled satisfaction to perceive, that this course of conduct is in unison with the common sentiments of our community; and that, as it were, by tacit and almost unanimous consent, the grand and enduring interests of education are held to belong to all mankind, and not to be restricted to any portion or party of them. It is a cause which enlists its advocates and champions alike, from ranks, which on other subjects, are arrayed in hostile attitudes against each other; and it seems now, at least to a very great extent, to have become an axiom in the public mind, that the diffusion of useful knowledge, the increase of intellectual energy, the habit of impartial investigation, and a higher moral purity and purpose, will assuredly, in the end, promote whatever is right and diminish whatever is wrong, in the views of all the parties into which our society is unhappily divided. As, from the very nature and constitution of the human mind, and of the world in which it is placed, error and wrong can be permanently serviceable to no one, it becomes the interest as well as the duty of all, to establish and encourage whatever is true in principle and right in conduct; and where fundamental differences prevail, as to what is true and right, it should be the object of all to labor unitedly in training up more able, more impartial and purer minds, which may have the light to discern and the wisdom to adopt higher views, both in theory and practice, than were possessed by their doubting, or contending predecessors. Had it not been for the vehemence of contention, out of our Conventions, we should not have tested, so fully, the strength of the principles which have produced harmony within them.

In the Report of last year, I felt warranted in assuring the Board, that, in addition to certain visible and palpable improvements, capable of being specifically enumerated, there were causes silently at work, from which results still more desirable, would soon be developed. As far as such results can be reduced to figures, and presented in statistical tables, the last Abstract abundantly realizes the anticipation.

In 1838, the amount of money raised by taxes for the support of

schools, including only the wages of teachers, board, }
and fuel, was } \$447,809 96.

In 1839, the amount raised for the same purpose was \$477,221 24.

Here is an increase in the appropriations, amounting, in round numbers, to \$30,000, in a single year. But the *real* increase last year, in the expenditure for teachers' wages, board and fuel, must have considerably exceeded the apparent. It had been a very prevalent custom, in the State, for districts to abstract a portion of the money raised for wages, board and fuel, and to appropriate it for schoolhouse repairs, and other incidental expenses. Although, to some extent, this may have been done, during the last year, yet I have reason to believe, that a practice so illegal and reprehensible as this, is now mainly abolished. No stronger evidence of an increasing interest in our schools can be adduced, than this substantial advance in the amount of appropriations for their support; nor can any act be more creditable to our citizens than these voluntary levies for the cause of education.

Another point of comparison, not less gratifying, consists in the average length of the schools. For the school year of 1837, their average length was six months and twenty-five days; for that, ending May 1, 1839, it was seven months and four days, and for that ending May 1st, 1840, seven months and ten days, exhibiting an average increase, in three years, of almost a fortnight, in the length of about three thousand schools, i. e. nearly fifteen hundred months, or a hundred and twenty-five years in the whole.

Again, the prospects of that meritorious class of persons engaged in teaching our schools, are decidedly improving. In 1837, the average wages per month, including board, paid to male teachers was \$25 44. Last year, it was \$33 08, being an increase in three years, of \$7 64 per month. In 1837, the average wages, inclusive of board, paid to females, was \$11 38. Last year, it was \$12 75, being an increase, for the same time, of \$1 37 per month. The school year 1839-40, when compared with that of 1838-9, also exhibits a very decided advance in respect to the wages both of males and females, notwithstanding that the first mentioned was a year, when other departments of business were discharging hundreds from employment, and compelling them to seek elsewhere for

occupation and subsistence. From the nature of the case, however, we are forbidden to anticipate equal advances, either in regard to the amount of wages, or the length of the schools, in coming years, because a proportional increase every year, would lead to a rate of wages indefinitely high, and to the impossible result of more than twelve months' schooling in a year.

There are other points of improvement, for which the tables in the Abstract furnish no measure or index, but which are not of inferior importance. The visitation of the schools by the school committees was at least twice, if not three times greater, last year, than in any previous year since 1827, when the law creating them was enacted; and these visitations confer upon the schools unnumbered benefits. Visits by parents, also, were very much increased, compared with any former year. In regard to parental visits, however, there has been a great difference between different districts; some schools having received the full advantages of such visits, while others have been left to plod on their slow and weary way, unanimated by them.

More schoolhouses have been erected within the State, during the last year, than for the ten years preceding 1838; and, generally speaking, they are of a description vastly superior to those formerly built. Boston, Lowell, Charlestown, Roxbury, have erected splendid edifices, at once demonstrating the liberality of their citizens, and foretoking the benefits to be enjoyed by their children. Within the last eight months, the town of Plymouth has erected six new schoolhouses, and repaired three old ones.

These and similar improvements, in the administration of the system, though they may elude statistical tables, cannot have been made without the happiest influences, both intellectual and moral, upon the schools. A pupil may understand the lessons he reads better than before; he may acquire knowledge in such a way that it will stay by him during life, instead of evaporating just as fast as his recitations proceed; he may be stimulated to double his exertions, and thereby to increase both his attainments and his ability; he may be led to act from higher motives, and to look upon all the great duties of life with a clearer vision, and yet there may be no scales, in which all these improvements can be weighed, at the close of the school term. It is the steady accumulation of these elements, during the

years of pupillage, which leads to the formation of a lofty character in adult life. When, therefore, we see that favoring influences are at work, we cannot be sceptical as to their results. We do not doubt the influences of one fertilizing shower, or of one day of genial sunshine upon our grain-fields or our orchards, though we cannot measure the increase of size in a single kernel of the grain, nor apply any subtile test to show how much the fruit has gained in the richness of its flavor.

In regard to the current year, I have reason to believe that the improvement of the schools, in the more appropriate selection of studies, in the thoroughness of the instruction given, and in that exercise of mind that gives strength as well as knowledge, will greatly exceed that of any previous year. The grand truths, that the object of instruction and training is not so much to enable a child to narrate the great things which others have done, as to cultivate the judgment and discretion by which, in similar circumstances, he could do the same things himself; not so much to commit to memory the contents of a book, as to acquire, in some good degree, the knowledge and the ability, by which the book itself was produced, and from which, if the book were lost, he could reproduce it; that study and recitations are of little consequence, except as they lead to habits of investigation, and of a clear statement of things known; and that external actions are nothing in comparison with the motives from which they emanate;—these reforming and revolutionizing truths are every day penetrating deeper and deeper into the minds of those who are superintending the education of our youth.

SCHOOL ABSTRACTS.

The event most interesting, and bearing most directly upon the welfare of the schools, which has occurred within the last year, is the publication of the Annual Abstract of the School Returns for the school year, 1839-40, enriched, as it is, with selections from the school committees' reports. In relation to this volume, I have the declarations of many gentlemen, well qualified to judge, that they are unacquainted with any document, in any language, which would be so serviceable to our schools, as this; or one, which hereafter, will possess a greater historical interest. The document

is large,—larger than I intended it should be,—but as the printing of the work went on simultaneously with the making of the selections for it, it was impossible to foresee at the beginning, what those selections would amount to at the close ; and when that amount was ascertained, it was necessarily too late for any abridgement. But there was an overruling consideration belonging to the subject, viz : that the volume could not have been materially reduced in size, without being greatly diminished in value. It is also an important fact, that, as we have now ascertained the real condition of our schools, their errors, and their defects, the necessity of preparing another so voluminous a document, is superseded for the future.

Very exaggerated statements having gone abroad, last year, respecting the expense of clerk hire in the department of the Secretary of State, on account of assistance rendered, in preparing the Abstract of 1838-9, (a much smaller volume than the present,) I made an arrangement this year, with Mr. Bigelow, the Secretary, by which this portion of the work, and all expense for stationery in executing it, should be separated from the other expenses of his office, in order to show what was justly chargeable under this head. The result is, that the whole cost, both of clerk hire and stationery, is one hundred and fifty dollars only.

By the law of 1838, the Secretary of the Board of Education is required, annually, to visit each county in the State, “to collect information of the condition of the public schools, of the fulfilment of the duties of their office by all members of the school committees, and of the circumstances of the several school districts in regard to all the subjects of teachers, pupils, books, apparatus and methods of education.” Another law of the same year, requires school committees “annually to make a detailed report of the condition of the several public schools in their respective towns, designating particular improvements in the methods or means of education, and stating such facts or suggestions in relation thereto, as, in their opinion, will best promote the interests and increase the usefulness of said schools,” and to transmit a copy of said reports to the department of State. These enactments, in connection with the publication, in the Annual Abstracts, of selections from those reports, constitute an era in the history of the Common Schools of Massachusetts. In no other State or country, so far as I am aware, is a train of measures pursued, so

simple yet so effective, for diffusing information in regard to the schools, as we have now been pursuing in this Commonwealth for the last three years. In the first place, an agent is sent into each county in the State, to make a diligent and laborious tour of exploration. The results of his survey are then communicated to the Legislature, and by them are sent to every town, to every school committee, and to every school district. If these communications contain any general principles or suggestions, which are deemed worthy of consideration, the school committees and friends of education in the respective towns, explain their relevancy, and urge upon their fellow-citizens the adoption of practical measures to carry out the improvements suggested. The town school committees then make a "detailed" report, respecting the condition of the schools in their own town, for the double purpose of informing their fellow-townsmen, what that condition may be, and of transmitting that information to a common centre, where all their reports are collected. The first object,—that of informing their fellow-townsmen,—is accomplished, either by the reading of the report in open town meeting, or by printing it for general distribution among the inhabitants; and, in either case, by filing the original in the office of the town clerk, where it will be always open for reference. After copies of all the reports have been collected in one place, they are carefully examined; whatever is merely of a local and private character is omitted, because it still remains in the archives of the town whence it came, for the use of the inhabitants; but whatever is of general and permanent utility, is embodied in the Annual Abstract. And here the scattered rays of light, converged to a focus, become a sun. The Abstract is then distributed throughout the Commonwealth, and thus each town and each school committee, in return for its own contributions, receives back the facts, views, suggestions, experience, reasonings, conclusions, of all the others in the State. Knowledge which was local, becomes universal. Experiments which have failed, are not repeated. New methods and arrangements, which are found to work well, are adopted, at once, and without the delay or the expense of a first discovery. A coincidence of testimony, as to supposed improvements or deficiencies, inspires confidence, and renders it easier to introduce a good practice in pursuance of a good theory, or to abolish evils, that

plead ancient usage for their continuance. Each committee-man and teacher looks upon himself, not as an isolated and solitary individual, toiling in an unknown and narrow sphere, but as a member of a great company, working for a common end ;—and this consciousness tends to invigorate each with the strength of all. Towns, too, which heretofore have been most indifferent to the cause, are aroused by the sight of what others are doing ; and are stimulated to exertion, if not by the noble desire of excellence, yet at least, by the shame of conspicuous inferiority.

In various respects, the two last Abstracts are invaluable documents. Not only are facts of the greatest importance brought to light, but they come with an authority that cannot be gainsaid nor questioned. A host of witnesses, of the greatest intelligence and respectability, without motive for exaggeration or opportunity for concert,—witnesses, residing respectively in all parts of the State, and whose collective knowledge, therefore, embraces the condition of all the schools within it, offer, in these volumes, their well-considered testimony respecting one of the most important of all our institutions.

Although, therefore, the first report which I submitted to the Board, was mainly occupied with an exposition of the topics discussed in these two documents, yet the basis of facts was then so comparatively limited, and the weight of authority in support of them was so disproportionate to that which now exists, that I feel justified in going, substantially, over the same ground again,—hoping with these new materials to give greater clearness and expansion to the views there presented. Without the arrogance of supposing that I can prepare any thing so pertinent and judicious as many of the committees' reports are, yet it is obvious that some views will be presented to one who occupies a central eminence, which would be inevitably hidden from those whose position, though it gives them an opportunity for a clearer and closer inspection within a limited sphere, still shuts them out from a comprehensive survey of the entire field of operations. This is my apology for attempting in this report, a presentation of the topics, which have already been treated of by the committees, in so able and admirable a manner.

It would seem desirable to exhibit some general outline of the objects proposed, and the principles observed in the preparation of the two last Abstracts, before commenting in detail on the various sub-

jects they discuss. For this purpose, I must refer the Board to the short reports prefixed to them, as the explanations there given, are as brief and apposite, as any thing I could now prepare.

**PRINCIPLES ON WHICH SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN SUPPORTED
IN MASSACHUSETTS, SINCE 1647.**

On inspecting the laws of the Commonwealth, which provide for public instruction, two grand features stand conspicuously forth, viz : that the benefits of a Common-School education shall be brought within the reach of every child in the State, however poor ; and that the property of the State shall support a system of schools adequate to confer this universal education. These provisions are fundamental and organic. They have been in existence from the very infancy of the colony,—a period of about two centuries,—during all which time, the statute book furnishes no instance of their repeal or modification. The mode of administration has been changed, but not the original basis of the system. The principles have reigned supreme, throughout, that the property of the citizens, whether it represented children or not, should support the schools ; and that all children, whether they represented property or not, should possess the means of education.

In regard to the mode of administration, it was not until the year 1789 that the present district system had any legal existence. Between 1768 and 1789, “precincts” or parishes, (which were then territorial,) were allowed to maintain schools, by a tax upon the parishioners ; but, previous to 1768, the schools were sustained by towns acting in their municipal capacity. The law of 1789 recites that “whereas, by means of the dispersed situation” of the inhabitants of some towns, “the children and youth cannot be collected in any one place for their instruction,” it had become expedient to divide the territory of the towns into separate districts ; and it then proceeds to empower towns “to determine and define the limits of school districts.” The great majority of the towns in the State have since exercised the power which this law conferred, by a geographical division of their respective territories, into school districts ; so that now, with but three hundred and seven towns in the State, we probably have not less than twenty-five hundred school districts.

Several towns still manage the schools in their corporate capacity, and in some districts there are two or more schools. The number of public schools in the State last year, was 3,072.

Whatever advantages may be realized, or evils averted, by this change from the town to the district system, it is certain that the latter has been carried to a most injurious extent. The following is a tabular view of the winter schools, for the winter of 1839-40, classified according to the number of the scholars belonging to them respectively. It includes 2708 schools only, there being, in regard to the others, some imperfection in the returns, which renders their classification impracticable :

Schools not exceeding 10 scholars,	.	.	.	14
From 10 to 20	"	.	.	194
" 20 to 30	"	.	.	426
" 30 to 40	"	.	.	562
" 40 to 50	"	.	.	479
" 50 to 60	"	.	.	376
" 60 to 70	"	.	.	251
" 70 to 80	"	.	.	153
" 80 to 90	"	.	.	80
" 90 to 100	"	.	.	43
" 100 to 200	"	.	.	110
" 200 to 500	"	.	.	18
Over 500	.	.	.	2

The winter schools contained, in the whole, 149,222 scholars ; while the summer schools, for the same school year, contained only 124,345, which is one-sixth less than the winter ; and therefore, on an average, the summer schools must have been one-sixth smaller than the winter, as represented in the above table.

Another view of the subject establishes the same result, in regard to the too minute subdivision of our territory into school districts. The number of square miles in the area of Massachusetts is 7,500, which is less, on an average, than two and a half square miles to a school. Now, if a schoolhouse is situated in the centre of a territory of four square miles, (that is, two miles square,) none, or but few of the scholars,—such only as live in the corners of the square,—would be obliged to travel more than one mile to the

school. Were the State, therefore, divided into sections, each of which should contain four square miles, it would require, to dot its surface all over, less than nineteen hundred schoolhouses, which, in parallel rows, in either direction, would not be more than two miles apart ;—or, which is the same thing, each schoolhouse would have four other schoolhouses within two miles of it. Nineteen hundred luminous points, each one shedding its beams through a radius of a little more than one mile, would cover the whole surface of the State with a flood of light. Instead of nineteen hundred, however, we have more than three thousand schools ; but the light which they dispense is in the inverse ratio of their number, for the aliment that feeds their flame is divided into portions so scanty, that many of them emit only a feeble and flickering ray. The mountainous or sandy and uninhabited portions of the State, where no schoolhouse is wanted, would be a fair offset for the cities and more populous places, where they must be more numerous, (the valuation statistics showing that more than one quarter of the entire surface of the State is unimproved, or unimprovable land ;)—making, therefore, all due allowance on this account, it is obvious that the *number* of schoolhouses in the State is fifty per cent. greater than it needs to be, to accommodate all the children within it, so far as extent of territory or distance of travel to school is concerned.

Various causes have conspired to produce this result,—some of them pardonable, some censurable, all most unfortunate. In laying off the town into districts, the committee appointed for the purpose would be solicited to make the districts small, in order to supersede the necessity of sending far to school ; so that in the original survey and location, the chances would preponderate in favor of too minute a subdivision.

During the fifty years, since the enactment of the law, authorizing this geographical division of the towns into districts, very many cases have occurred, where, on account of the laying out of new roads, or the opening of new places of business, the population has shifted, and a portion of territory which once contained inhabitants enough for a school, has been reduced to a small number of people, while the school and the limits of the school district have remained as they were, though the facts which justified their establishment have ceased to exist. On the other hand, where a dis-

trict, which originally contained only children enough for a single school, has, by an accession to its population, outgrown the dimensions of the schoolhouse, the general course has been to divide the territory of the district, and establish two schools in two school-houses, instead of preserving the integrity of the district, and separating the children into older and younger classes, for different apartments in the same house.

Another cause of the dismemberment of districts cannot be too severely censured. Where local or neighborhood quarrels have arisen, from any cause, amongst the inhabitants of a school district, they have often resulted in a division of its territory. In the administration and management of a school, many points are presented concerning which even judicious and well-disposed men may honestly differ ; but when hostile parties are arrayed against each other, and a contentious spirit prevails, every passing day furnishes occasions for dissension. The district being thrown into a state of civil warfare, one of the most obvious means for a separation of the combatants and the restoration of peace, is a division of the battle-field. When the passions of men are excited, their highest privileges are readily sacrificed, and this melancholy truth is not without many illustrations. Cases have occurred, where those inhabitants of a district, who contested the location of a schoolhouse in a given spot, on account of its alleged distance from their homes, have prosecuted hostilities to a division of the territory, and have then erected a new house within a stone's throw of the very spot, whose remoteness from their own residences was before deemed an intolerable grievance. The more ignorant the people of a district are, and the more need they consequently have of the benefits of a school, the more likely are they to do themselves this wrong. But the consequences are fatal. The power of the district is annihilated. Suppose a district to have \$90 to be expended for the wages and board of a teacher, and for fuel, during the winter school. If his wages are \$20 a month, his board \$8, and the fuel \$2, for the same time, then the sum of \$90 will sustain the school *three* months. But if a contention among the inhabitants results in a division of the district, the share of each part is reduced to \$45, instead of \$90. This sum, at the same rates, (even after the expense of erecting another school-house has been incurred,) will sustain a school only a month and a

half, instead of three months. But the last six weeks of a three months' school, under a good teacher, is worth more than double the first six, so that the value of the divided fund is reduced to less than a fourth part of that of the undivided. Both parties, conqueror and conquered, are alike defeated ; for the prize of the contest turns to a shadow the moment it is won.

Other consequences of this evil are, that it leads to the erection of contracted, inadequate schoolhouses ; it stands in the way of all outlays for necessary repairs, and of all appropriations for the purchase of furniture, apparatus, libraries, &c., and it gives a new lease of existence to all old schoolhouses, however dilapidated or miserable ; for notwithstanding their acknowledged inconvenience, discomfort and unhealthfulness, the answer, that the district is small and poor silences all arguments in favor of a reform. Small districts, too, naturally desiring to prolong their schools disproportionately to the money they draw, are under a constant temptation to employ cheap teachers ; and although it is not a universal truth, yet it is a very general one, that a *cheap* and an *incompetent* teacher are synonymous terms. Good teachers can do better elsewhere, so that the districts, which have thus crippled and enervated themselves, must, from the necessity of the case, be content with an inferior grade of teachers, not one year only, but year after year, and during the whole stage of their children's education. Straitened and impoverished in this way, some districts have been driven to the expedient of wholly omitting the school for a year, and then of expending the allowance of two years, at once. The blessed office of the peace-maker is never more worthily exercised than in restoring a contentious school district to harmony.

Another consideration pertaining to this subject is, that there is a limit downwards as well as upwards, in regard to the number of scholars, most eligible for a school. No teacher can do justice to an ordinary district school, of more than fifty scholars, especially if they are advanced ones. If he has more, he cannot keep them occupied, nor has he time for the necessary oral instruction of the classes. Hence the law of March 19, 1839, required that a female assistant should be employed in every town or district school in the State, which contained fifty scholars on an average, unless the town or dis-

trict should, at a meeting regularly called for the purpose, vote to dispense with the same. But the number of scholars may be too small as well as too great. In most branches, a large class is not only taught as easily, but more efficiently than a small one. Numbers are a natural stimulus to all the social faculties, and hence they incite to greater exertions. As the number of inquisitive learners is increased, more questions will be asked in regard to the lessons, and thus the subject will be presented in a greater variety of lights. All experienced teachers must have observed, that a bright scholar will suggest doubts or difficulties, which not only would never have occurred to a learned man, but would be less likely to occur to him, just in proportion to the extent of his learning. Hence the advantage of numbers in a school; and if fifty be regarded as the maximum, probably forty would be, as the minimum for a Common School; but we have more than twelve hundred below this number. The natural consequences, of very small districts, are poverty in the purse that supports, and in the spirit which animates them; and when these disastrous and blighting effects do not follow, it is only because the powerful tendency to such a result is counteracted by a few energetic and indefatigable men, who supply a vigor of will which sustains the activity of the system, in defiance of its natural infirmities. In fine, it is obvious, that all the strength, which comes from the union and concert of numbers is lost, when a town commits the grand error of pulverizing its territory and leaving each atom to its own resources.

Since the law of 1789, it has been optional with the towns, either to create districts and to devolve the main part of the administration of the schools upon them, or to carry on the system itself, in its corporate capacity. In a great majority of cases, the former mode has been adopted and now prevails; nor is it probable that it will be, hereafter, to any great extent, abandoned in favor of the latter. Yet it is an undeniable fact, that the schools are best conducted when they are managed by the town and not by districts. Under the town system, all the interested as well as the benevolent tendencies favor improvement. Each section of the town will contend for a good schoolhouse, because the town, and not the district, is to bear the expense of building it. A good schoolhouse in one section, will supply an argument, on the ground of equality, for good houses in all the others. For the same reason, each will demand all suitable and

timely repairs, competent teachers, equal supervision, and all the other constituents of prosperity in a school. These are obvious causes for the incontestible fact, that the town system of administration produces the best schools ; and it is a fact which ought to be understood, for although the towns in this Commonwealth may not be induced to break up the prevalent system, and return to the former, yet the natural tendencies of the two systems ought to be known in those States which are just entering upon a plan of public instruction, and, having no ancient usages to change, can begin with the best.

What then is the remedy for this undue multiplication of school districts ? I answer, the remedy must depend upon the circumstances of each case. Where there are now two or three school districts, in a section of country not exceeding four or five square miles in area, (equal to two, or a little more than two, miles square ;) or when the extreme settled parts of a section of any size, are but about one mile, or one mile and a half, from the centre of its population, the remedy is the consolidation of the districts into one, and the separation of the older from the younger scholars. If the number of children is sufficiently large, three divisions are better than two,—the first to contain the scholars below six or seven years of age, the second, those between that age and eleven, twelve, or thirteen, according to circumstances, and the third, all above. Where this has already been done, the advantages are so apparent, that no consideration could induce the united districts to revert to the old system, by a separation. Where all the small children belonging to two or three schools are brought together, the number of those of similar ages and attainments is two or three times as great. Instead of calling up the children singly, to teach them the alphabet, or to read in simple lessons, and devoting but two or three minutes to each one, as is commonly done,—all, in the same stage of advancement, may be classed together ; and thus the time, so much of which is wasted in coming and going, and in beginning and ending the lessons, and all of which is substantially lost by being broken into fragments, becomes sufficient, when its scattered portions are united, for a thorough recitation, with the necessary accompaniment of oral explanations. This course would promote two great purposes, economy in time, and efficiency of instruction, and would

thereby immeasurably increase both the quantity and the quality of the education which the same amount of money could be made to yield.

Another remedy, wherever applicable, is still more advantageous ; and when circumstances will permit, it should always supersede the former. It consists in the establishment of

UNION SCHOOLS.

The ruinous consequences of creating small districts, having been communicated to the Board and to the Legislature, in January, 1838, led to the enactment of the law of April 25, 1838, respecting Union Schools. A more remedial and salutary law, in regard to this evil, could not have been devised. It authorizes "any two or more contiguous school districts, in this Commonwealth, to associate together and form a Union District, for the purpose of maintaining a Union School, to be kept for the benefit of the older children of such associated districts, if the inhabitants of each of such districts shall, at legal meetings called for that purpose, agree to form such union, by a vote of two thirds of the legal voters thereof ;" and it gives to such Union District the powers of a body corporate.

The union system is applicable to all places, where the distance from the extremes to the centre of population is too great for the younger children to go daily to school, but not too great for the older. In such cases, there should be separate houses, two, three, or more, where the smaller children can be taught by females, while the larger ones should be accommodated at or near the centre of the territory. Ordinarily, the existing schoolhouses and the territorial limits of the districts, as now laid out, will answer the first purpose, while for the Union School some further provision will be necessary. The advantages of the Union School may be briefly stated under the following heads :—1. Economy of the plan. 2. Management and Discipline.

1. **ECONOMY OF THE PLAN.** In the first place, the plan of Union Districts commends itself, on the score of economy, to every man, who desires to make a given amount of money accomplish more good ; or to derive an equal amount of good from less money. In my Report on Schoolhouses, pp. 30, 31, it is arithmetically proved, that,

where four districts can be united for this purpose, a given sum of money, which now sustains four summer schools, taught by females, and four winter schools taught by males, only four months each, would, under the proposed arrangement, maintain the four summer schools, six months each, and a winter school, eight months, instead of four, would give the master \$35 a month instead of \$25, and would still leave in the treasury, an unexpended balance of \$20. The demonstration, as to the economy of the plan, being there wrought out, and open to the inspection of any one who will examine it, I leave this topic, with a single statement, illustrative of the necessity of adopting some immediate and efficient remedy. In my circuit, last autumn, through a part of the State which I had not visited before, I saw six schoolhouses all situated on the same road, the extreme ones of which were but a mile and a half apart, and of course only three-fourths of a mile from a central point. In these, the uniform practice had been to employ six females in summer, and six males in winter. And thus, as it regards the winter schools, the wages and board of six men had been paid, and fuel for six fires provided, when one male principal, who might have received, and been worthy of the most liberal salary,—with suitable female assistants, if necessary,—might have accomplished ten times the good, at a greatly reduced expense. All this was acknowledged as soon as pointed out, and assurances of a change gratefully given. How great would be the gain, if the spirit of economy, which is often so active at the town meeting when the money for schools is granted, could be transferred to its expenditure, by a wiser mode of appropriation.

2. **MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE.** A more trying situation to a person of judgment and good feelings cannot well be conceived, than that of having the sole charge of a school of sixty, seventy or eighty scholars, of all ages, where he is equally exposed to censure for the indulgences that endanger good order, and for the discipline that enforces it. One of the inquiries contained in the circular letter to the school committees, in 1838, was respecting the ages of the children attending our public schools. By the answers it appeared, that in very many places the schools were attended by scholars of all ages, between four years and twenty; and, in some places, by

those between two years and a half and twenty-five ;—and thus the general regulations of the school, as to order, stillness and the observance of a code of fixed laws, were the same, for infants but just out of their cradles, and for men who had been enrolled seven years in the militia. Now, nothing can be more obvious, than that the kind of government, appropriate and even indispensable, for one portion of these scholars, was flagrantly unsuitable for the other. The larger scholars, with a liberal recess, can keep their seats and apply their minds for three consecutive hours. But to make small children sit, both dumb and motionless, for three successive hours, with the exception of a brief recess and two short lessons, is an infraction of every law which the Creator has impressed upon both body and mind. There is but one motive by which this violence to every prompting of nature can be committed, and that is an overwhelming, stupefying sense of fear. If the world were offered to these children, as a reward for this prolonged silence and inaction, they would spurn it ; the deep instinct of self-preservation alone, is sufficient for the purpose. The irreparable injury of making a child sit straight, and silent, and motionless, for three continuous hours, with only two or three brief respites, cannot be conceived. Its effect upon the body is to inflict severe pain, to impair health, to check the free circulations in the system,—all which leads to dwarfishness ;—and to misdirect the action of the vital organs, which leads to deformity. In regard to the intellect, it suppresses the activity of every faculty, and as it is a universal law, in regard to them all, that they acquire strength by exercise and lose tone and vigor by inaction, the inevitable consequence is, both to diminish the number of things they will be competent to do, and to disable them from doing this limited number so well as they otherwise might. In regard to the temper and morals, the results are still more deplorable. To command a child, whose mind is furnished with no occupation, to sit for a long time, silent in regard to speech and dead in regard to motion, when every limb and organ aches for activity ;—to set a child down in the midst of others, whose very presence acts upon his social nature as irresistibly as gravitation acts upon his body, and then to prohibit all recognition of, or communication with his fellows, is subjecting him to a temptation to disobedience, which it is alike physically and morally

impossible he should wholly resist. What observing person, who has ever visited a school, where the laws of bodily and mental activity were thus violated, has failed to see how keenly the children watch the motions of the teacher, how eagerly, the first moment when his face is turned from them, or any person or object intervenes to screen them from his view, they seize upon the occasion to whisper, laugh, chaffer, make grimaces, or do some other thing against the known laws of the school. Every clandestine act of this kind cultivates the spirit of deception, trickery and fraud ; it leads to the formation, not of an open and ingenuous, but of a dissembling, wily, secretive character. The evil is only aggravated when the teacher adopts the practice of looking out, under his eyebrows as it is called, or of glancing at them obliquely, or of wheeling suddenly round, in order to detect offenders in the act of transgression. Such a course is a practical lesson in artifice and stratagem, set by the teacher ; and the consequence is, that to entrap on the one side and elude on the other, soon becomes a matter of rivalry and competition, between teacher and pupils. Probably it is within the recollection of most persons, that after the close of some school terms, both teacher and pupils have been heard to boast,—the one, how many he had ensnared, the others, how often they had escaped ;—thus presenting the spectacle of the moral guide of our youth, and the moral subjects of his charge *boasting* of mutual circumvention and disingenuousness.

Teachers who manage schools with a due observance of those laws with which the Creator has pervaded the human system, are accustomed, when scholars have become restless and uneasy, to send them out to run, or, in some way, to take exercise, until the accumulation of muscular and nervous energy, which prompted their uneasiness, is expended. They will then return to the school room to sit with composure, or to study with diligence and vigor.

I have deemed this matter of so much consequence, and have found, in some places, such inveterate, false habits and modes of thinking respecting it, that I have desired to fortify my own views by those of gentlemen, whose authority none will venture to question. Accordingly, I have obtained the opinions of some of the most eminent physicians and physiologists in the State, and have selected three from the number to be placed in the appendix.

The remedies for these various evils are, the establishment of Union Schools, wherever the combined circumstances of territory and population will allow ;—the consolidation of two or more districts into one, where the union system is impracticable ; and where the population is so sparse as to prevent either of these courses, there to break in upon the routine of the school, either by confining the young children for a less number of hours, or by giving to them two recesses, each half day. The health of the body must be preserved, because it is the only medium through which the brightest intellect and the purest morals can bless the world.

If it were possible to measure or gauge the quantity and quality of instruction, which the teacher could give, under the union system, compared with that which he can give in a school composed of scholars of all ages and in all stages of advancement, no further proof, in favor of a classification of the children into divisions of older and younger, would be needed. A teacher well versed in the better modes of instruction, which are beginning to be adopted, will, in most branches, teach each one of a class of twenty, more, in the same time, than he could teach any one individual of the same class. What an accession to his usefulness, that is, to the improvement of the children, would thus be gained ! And is it not an unpardonable waste of means, where it can possibly be avoided, to employ a man, at \$25 or \$30 a month, to teach the alphabet, when it can be done much better, at half price, by a female teacher ?

The Union School is found to improve all the schools in the constituent districts. The children in the lower schools look upward to the higher with ambition, and labor more earnestly, that they may be prepared to enter it. So far as my knowledge extends, no districts which have adopted, could be induced to abandon it.

SCHOOLHOUSES.

It is a subject for universal congratulation, that, when speaking of our schoolhouses, emotions of pleasure now begin to mingle with those of pain. Before the publication, in 1832, by the American Institute of Instruction, of two most valuable papers on this subject,—viz. Dr. Alcott's Prize Essay, and the Lecture of William J. Adams, Esq.—there was not to my knowledge, (and I have now

been four times over the State, with this subject among the uppermost in my mind,) a single public schoolhouse in the Commonwealth, which in its general construction, and especially in its interior arrangements, would now be considered even tolerably good. From that time to 1838 and 9, the erection of a schoolhouse became a fact of less rare occurrence ; and in some of those which were built, a part of the improvements suggested in the excellent productions above referred to, were adopted. During the year now just passed, more schoolhouses have been erected than for ten years, previous to 1838 ; and not only is the number greater, but many of them are admirable models of schoolhouse architecture. The examples set by Boston, Chelsea, Charlestown, Lowell, Roxbury, Plymouth, Greenfield, are worthy of universal imitation.

The subject of schoolhouse architecture has been so extensively discussed, both in former reports, and now in the Abstracts, as to preclude the necessity of any detailed reference to it, at the present time. The close connection of the schoolhouses with the cheerfulness and health of children, with their symmetry of form and length of life ; its intimate relation to their habits of order, cleanliness, and punctuality ; its powerful influence on intellectual progress, on manners and temper, and through temper on conduct and character ; its prerogative of deciding the question, whether the school shall be a place of attraction or repulsion to the young, from the day of their earliest associations with it ; its power to further, or to baffle all the plans of a good teacher ; and its being the pride or the opprobrium of the district where it stands ;—all these considerations have been so earnestly and loudly urged, that there can scarcely be an individual in the State whose ears they have not reached. There is not a town in the State, where some men cannot now be found who comprehend this subject in its great relations to the public good ; and to them must be committed the duty of arousing the public mind to an active sense of its importance. Academies and private schools, which are sustained by a few individuals, are, almost without exception, kept in comfortable, well-arranged and attractive buildings. Why is it, that the whole public is so much less able than a part of it, to maintain decent and respectable places for education ? Why should private dwellings, churches, courthouses, markets, or even

jails and prisons be superior, in some of the most important desiderata of a residence, to the public schoolhouse? Certainly, a foreigner, in travelling over our territory, would find a surer augury of the perpetuity, or the downfall of our institutions, in the appearance of our schoolhouses, than in all else within the range of his observation. Forts, arsenals, garrisons, armies, navies, are means of security and defence, which were invented in half-civilized times and in feudal or despotic countries; but schoolhouses are the Republican line of fortifications, and if they are dismantled and dilapidated, ignorance and vice will pour in their legions through every breach.

Before leaving this subject, however, it is necessary to point out one evil which a little precaution will abundantly remedy. I refer to the bad repair of schoolhouses. A schoolhouse may be tolerable in its general construction and appearance, and yet be wretched and perilous, from wanting a few panes of glass in the windows, a hinge or panel for the door, plaster for the ceiling, a few feet of good stove pipe, or some similar reparation. It is a sad commentary on the character of the people, when a schoolhouse, surrounded by elegant mansions, is suffered to remain out of repair. A pane of glass will occasionally be broken, and the expedient of supplying its place, temporarily, with a hat or a coat, may be necessary; but a wooden substitute, well fastened in, argues premeditated neglect. These mischiefs often arise, because the prudential committee, whose duty it is to put and to keep the schoolhouse in good condition, has no district funds, in his hands, for that purpose, and he dislikes to run the district into debt to any third person, or to assume the expense himself, and thereby become its creditor. The district neglects to levy a tax, because the amount immediately required may be but three or four dollars,—perhaps only as many shillings, and because the expenses of assessment and collection will exceed the sum needed; and thus the evil continues, although each individual suffers more than the whole cost of the remedy. One district, last winter, had the sum of \$73 to expend for its winter school. A panel was gone from the schoolhouse door, which a few shillings would have replaced, but there were no funds, and the consequence was that it cost \$23 out of the seventy-three for fuel, while the remaining fifty dollars was expended for wages and board. Such enormous waste-

fulness is probably without a parallel, but any condition of things which permits it, should be immediately changed. It ought to be universally understood, that the prudential committee of a district carries an unlimited credit with him, as well for repairing, as for providing a schoolhouse;—nay, that he is liable to indictment, if he neglects, in the language of the law, to “provide a suitable place for the school.” But as it is always more agreeable to the agent to receive all requisite pecuniary means from his principal, the district ought always to keep a little money on hand, to be drawn upon, when necessary, by the prudential committee; or it should pass a vote, authorizing him to borrow sums sufficient to meet all exigencies, and then grant an occasional tax for their payment. In most cases, a tax of forty, or even thirty dollars, would provide for all contingencies for some time. Being granted and certified, the tax might be assessed and collected with the town taxes. One grant, in half a dozen or more years, would probably be sufficient; there would always be money on hand, and thus the mischiefs of delay, and the expense of separate levies for small sums, would both be avoided.

There is one other obstacle in the way of having a good schoolhouse, which, indeed, but seldom exists, but when it does exist, it is a very serious one, and at present, incapable of removal. It has happened several times within the last three years, that when a district very much needed a new house, and was ready to erect one, no site could be obtained for the purpose. The owner of a large farm, occupying the centre of the district, being opposed to the erection of a new house, either because he had no children to be benefited by the school, or could educate his own at a private one, or was averse to paying his share of the tax, has utterly refused to convey a piece of land for the house to stand on, or has demanded a price so exorbitant as to make a purchase by the district impossible. In these cases, I have been asked how it happens, that when a private citizen or a corporation wishes to erect a mill for spinning cotton or wool, or sawing timber, or grinding corn or bark, or making nails; or when land is wanted for a turnpike or a railroad;—how it happens, that a man's tillage land, his orchard or his garden, may be taken, or even his house cut down or removed, and his whole farm appropriated, but when a district wants but a single half acre of land

to be consecrated to the culture of the rising generation, it cannot be had. My answer has been, that in regard to the more material and corporeal interests of manufactures and thoroughfares, the Legislature has been importuned to act, and has provided by statute for a compulsory transfer of a man's estate, at a price fixed by a third party ;—but that, in regard to the spiritual and moral interests of our youth, no such application to them has ever been made, nor has any public opinion as yet existed, which would give to such an application a prospect of success.

INEFFICIENCY AND UNPRODUCTIVENESS OF EXPENDITURE, FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

The theory of Public Instruction, in this Commonwealth, as deduced from the statute book, and as it generally exists in the minds of the people, assorts or distributes that instruction, under two heads ;—first, that of the Incorporated Academy, and second, that of the Common School. The general sphere or office of the incorporated academy is to prepare students for college, or to give to them such specific instruction in advanced studies, as qualifies for some department of educated labor. But the institutions for common education have a wider,—a universal, sphere of action. They are designed, like the common blessings of heaven, to encompass all ;—so that every child that is born amongst us, shall as truly be said to be born into a world of intellectual and moral, as into a world of natural light ;—not a world where a few splendid beams fall upon a few favored eyes, while others are involved in darkness, but where a broad expanse of light spreads over and glows around all. Our theory of education proceeds upon the supposition, that every child will have too many duties to perform in after-life, not to begin to prepare for them, even before he has any conception what they are to be ; and that he will have too many dangers and temptations to encounter and to repel, not to begin to provide against them, even before he is apprized that they lie in ambush about his path. For these grand purposes the Common School was established, whose very name proclaims its eulogy.

The average number of students in the incorporated academies, in the school year 1838-9, was 3,599 ;—in the year 1839-40, it was 3,701. It is gratifying to witness this increase. It shows,—what

indeed could not have been doubted beforehand,—that whatever advances the prosperity of the Common Schools, will advance that of all the higher institutions of learning. The sum paid for tuition, last year, in the incorporated academies, was \$57,458 59, or between fifteen and sixteen dollars apiece for the students.

During the same year, the number of children in the State between the ages of four and sixteen years, was 179,268, or, in round numbers, one hundred and eighty thousand, and the expense for education in Common-School studies, was \$718,335 44. I propose hereafter, to show what proportion of this sum of money was lost by the permanent absences of the children from the schools, or their irregular attendance upon them. My present purpose is to demonstrate the prodigious loss, which all portions of the community have suffered from the inefficient and unproductive manner, in which this ample sum has been expended.

Of this \$718,335 44, expended for instruction in Common-School studies, the sum of \$477,221 24 was expended in the public schools, and the balance, viz. \$241,114 20, in private schools, select schools, high schools, unincorporated academies, schools kept to prolong Common Schools, &c., all of which may be classed under the general head of private schools. The average length of the public schools was seven months and ten days, and of the private schools, six months and ten days. The average wages of male teachers, in all the public schools in the State, was \$33 08, and of the female teachers, for the same schools, \$12 75, per month. Now, had the above-stated amount of money, (\$718,335 44,) which was expended for instruction in Common-School studies, but which, being divided into two funds, was sufficient to keep the public schools only seven months and ten days, on an average, and the private schools, only six months and ten days on, an average,—had this sum been united in one fund, and appropriated for the support of the public schools, it would have sustained them more than eleven months each ;—that is, for a longer portion of the year than it would generally be thought desirable to have our schools kept. This presents the astounding fact of a direct loss of nearly four months' schooling, to all the children in the State, in consequence of a division of the fund, to support two classes of schools, the public and the private, instead of concentrating its energies upon one. Even if the aggre-

gate of eight thousand three hundred and twenty-four months,—which is the amount of time, during which all the private schools, select schools, &c., were kept,—were averaged upon the public schools, and added to the length of their term, it would lengthen them only to ten months, instead of eleven ; and hence, even in that case, a month would be lost for each of the three thousand and seventy-two schools in the State.

Again, without this division of the fund, expended for instruction in Common-School studies, the public schools might all have been continued for ten months of the year, and the wages of all the teachers in them advanced more than ten per cent., without appropriating an additional dollar of money for the purpose. What a vast gain would accrue from such an enlightened change in our policy ;—schools prolonged nearly three months in the year, such liberal compensation given that all teachers could afford to prepare themselves better for their arduous and responsible duties, more talented persons engaging in the service, and an inducement held out to all to continue in the employment for a longer term.

In this computation it is only assumed, that if the whole fund were expended for public schools, the amount contributed for board and fuel would be in the same ratio to the whole sum that it now is. It undoubtedly would be greater.

Of this whole class of schools, which I have included in the generic term, private schools, it is difficult to speak in a manner not liable to misconstruction. But entertaining no unfriendly feelings towards any class of persons connected with them, whether as teachers or patrons ; never having cast, and intending never to cast any imputations upon their motives ; and feeling, moreover, that it is impossible fairly to discuss the great interests of Public Education, and leave this important branch of it unnoticed, I shall throw myself upon their candor, while I endeavor to show, that a dedication of all our means to one object, and a united and fraternal coöperation in promoting it, would confer a vastly greater amount of good upon each one of the whole, than any of them now enjoys ; and that an end so desirable can be accomplished at a diminished expense.

In the first place, however, I would remark, that it is due to many of those who sustain the system of private schools, to say, that they have been driven into its adoption, by the imperfect character of the

public schools. If a parent, who feels,—as every one worthy to be a parent does feel,—an obligation upon himself, authoritative as a command from heaven, to give to his children a good education, and who, therefore, is resolved, in the last resort, to make any sacrifice for the object ;—if he cannot command that education in the district where he belongs ; if the school term is short ; if from the low rate of compensation given, a perpetual succession of young and inexperienced teachers, are employed ; if the schoolhouse is in such a condition as to put the health of his children in daily jeopardy ;—then, after he has made earnest and persevering efforts to obtain, at least, a safe schoolhouse, a suitable length of term, and a competent instructor, and such efforts have proved unavailing ; so far is that parent from being blameworthy for securing a safer house, a longer term, and a better teacher, that if he did not do it, the voice of the community would unite with that of his own conscience in condemning his neglect. The necessity, however, of providing a private school for his children, in no case supersedes the obligation of laboring to elevate the public school, until the private one shall be no longer needful. And so of those who wish to dedicate their talents to the honorable profession of teaching. If they can command only short terms and scanty wages in the public service, they are free to seek employment elsewhere, for on no principle of justice can the public demand from them gratuitous labor. These concessions being made, may not a candid and impartial attention to the relation in which these schools stand to the great cause of free, public, Common-School instruction, be now expected ?

All private schools are naturally divided into two classes, the first of which consists of

SCHOOLS KEPT TO PROLONG COMMON SCHOOLS.

There is a custom in many districts, after the money appropriated to the support of the public schools is expended, for a few of the inhabitants most interested in education, to propose a few weeks' continuance of the school, at private expense. A subscription paper is circulated through the district, parents set down the number of children they will send, and, at the close of the school, the expense of sustaining it, (with the exception of the schoolhouse, which is occupied, rent-free,) is assessed upon them, according to the num-

ber of the children sent. Such schools are universally known in Massachusetts by the name of "Schools kept to prolong Common Schools." The same person who taught the public school is employed; the course of studies is the same, and the compensation of the teacher is generally the same. The difference is, that the expense is borne by persons of competent property who have children, while the wealthy who have no children, pay nothing, and the children of the poor who most need the benefits of the school, are kept at home, because of their parents' poverty. Here the question naturally arises, what is gained by such a course? Every one must see the loss, in the deprivation of a part of the children of the greatest of all benefits; but where is the compensatory gain? Suppose a town raises the sum of \$1,200 for its public schools;—suppose this sum sufficient to keep a school in each of its districts, six months, including both summer and winter terms; and further, that the districts, respectively, not satisfied with so short a school, desire to prolong it to seven months and a half; (I take this term of time, because it is very near the average length of the schools, last year.) This would be an addition of six weeks to the length of the public schools; and this addition being equal to one quarter of six months, will, of course, cost one quarter of \$1,200, i. e., \$300, so that the aggregate paid in the town, both for the public schools and the schools kept to prolong them, would be \$1,500. Now, wherein is any thing gained, by obtaining schools, for seven months and a half, in this way, over what would be realized, should the town grant the \$1,500, in the first instance? This only is gained;—suppose there are eight districts in the town, then there are eight subscriptions to be filled up, by a canvass of the eight districts; and eight assessments are to be made and collected. There is no prudential committee man to look after the condition of the schoolhouse; and difficulties not unfrequently arise in relation to injuries done to it, while the private school is keeping. The school has no title to be visited, and is not visited, by the town committee. The expense being paid by those who send, it is a departure from the great principle that the property of the State is bound to provide a good Common-School education for every child in the State. But the paramount vice of the measure,—that which renders all others insignificant in the comparison,—is, that the children of the poor do not

attend the school. Those who have little property get little education ; for when the advantages of a private school are offered to a poor man, the question whether he shall send his children to it, is a question to be settled by reference to his property ; but when the advantages of a public school are offered to the same man, the question, whether he shall send to it, is settled by the value he attaches to their education ; and the probabilities are, that these questions will, almost invariably, receive opposite answers. The evil re-acts, also, upon those who seemed to be exempted from it. At the opening of the next school term, the children of the poor are turned in upon the school ; and, by their relative backwardness, they hang as a clog upon the feet of the advanced scholars.

There is one advantage, however, belonging to this course of proceeding, which, in an impartial comparison of merits and defects, ought not to be overlooked. It affords to the district an opportunity to prolong the school, when the teacher happens to give good satisfaction ; or to close it, with the expenditure of the public money, when he does not. But this is very far from being a compensation for the evils referred to, to say nothing of the temptation which it sets before the teacher, to cultivate, by an unequal attention to their children, the good will of a few families, whose favor may be most likely to ensure a continuance of the school.

As to that large class of towns, then, which are in the habit of supplying the deficiency in the length of the public schools, by a contribution for this kind of private ones, it is respectfully suggested, whether a true economy of time, trouble and expense, the advantages of a better supervision of the schools, and the more equal and diffusive benefits of education, do not alike counsel them to add to the customary amount of the town's appropriation, a sum equal to what is now expended for prolonging the Common Schools. When the town will not increase its appropriation to this amount, then, to prolong the Common Schools is, on the whole, undoubtedly better, than to suffer under the stinted term, which the public money will sustain ;—especially is this so, if the praiseworthy and benevolent course, adopted by some districts, is followed, viz., that of opening the school to all the children in the district, whether their parents contribute to its support or not.

SELECT SCHOOLS, PRIVATE SCHOOLS, HIGH SCHOOLS, &c.

Under this head are included all the kinds of schools, which fall below the grade of those incorporated academies, whose design it is to prepare pupils for the college, or for some of the departments of educated labor. This class of schools teach the same branches which are taught, or should be taught, in the Common School ; and, on the part of those who sustain them, they are, to a very great extent, truly and professedly, substitutes for what the Common School ought to be. Their ordinary expense is six or eight times as great as that of an equally good Common School would be, if the two funds were united. But having, in my First Annual Report, explained, in some detail, the unfavorable influence, which this class of schools exerts upon the free ones, I will not go over that ground again, except in a very summary manner. It was there shown that the natural effect of this class of schools was to enhance the cost of education, without improving its quality ; to give the teachers a higher tuition fee, for each scholar, but to add nothing to the amount which, under a better system, they would obtain from the public ; to withdraw, from the public schools, some of the best scholars, and therefore to leave the rest without the benefit of their example, and, with the children, to withdraw, also, the guardian care and watchfulness of some of the most intelligent men in the district. It was further shown, that these schools, having supplied their patrons with means for educating their own children, adequate to their wants, they took away all motive to increase the town's appropriation, if they did not cause a positive reduction of it ; and that, as in most country districts, there were no surplus intelligence and public spirit that could be spared from the cause of public education, the transfer of the sympathies and interest of a considerable number of the most intelligent citizens left the Common School to languish ; or, what is infinitely worse, to acquire, through neglect, a pernicious efficiency in the formation of bad habits and character.

It is now three years since these views were expressed ; and after the most attentive observation and reflection during the intervening time, the only modification of them I would make, would be to set forth in a more earnest and impressive manner, the disastrous effects of this division of the fund, and this sundering of the unity of interests,

which should be kept forever one and indissoluble, and consecrated to the promotion of a common cause. As before stated, could these two funds be united, our school terms might be prolonged to the period of ten months in a year, and all the teachers receive an addition of more than ten per cent. to their wages, without the appropriation of an additional dollar. Other consequences which would necessarily flow from such a union of resources and concert of action would be, that the best of the private school teachers would be transferred to the public schools; in many cases, the convenient and even elegant houses, which have been prepared for the private schools would be purchased by the districts, and thus the stigma of their own forlorn and wretched buildings be taken away;—for it is as certain, as that the shadow attends the substance, that on entering a handsome village in almost any part of the State, and seeing a small, low-roofed, dilapidated, weather-beaten schoolhouse, obtruding itself from the corner of some street, or surrounded by noisy workshops, there will be found in that village one or more flourishing private schools, kept in commodious and elegant houses.

Taking the whole number in the State, of the class of schools generally called private, they average less than twenty-two scholars apiece. This number is obviously too small for economy, or for realizing the full benefits which the social feelings of fellow-pupils may exert upon them. When the teacher depends upon the school for his support, and the school is so small, he must be a highly conscientious man, to incur the risk of losing any portion of his pupils by thwarting their wishes in regard to the course of study, by enforcing thoroughness in the less attractive branches, or by such checks as are often necessary for the restraint of youthful impulses.

It is a matter of great curiosity to observe the workings of conflicting motives, in the same town, on the subject of its expenditures for the schools;—the motive of economy, limiting the amount of the town grants, and the motive of liberality for extending the schools. The latter strives to palliate the consequences of the former. And it will often be found that a majority of the inhabitants of a town will vote against a proposed increase in its appropriations, and then, the same year, a large majority in the same town will give, by private contribution, three or four times the amount of the pro-

posed increase in order to make up the deficiency in the town's grant. In the county of Barnstable, for instance, the practice extensively prevails, after the town has made its annual appropriations, for the districts to call meetings and to decide by a major vote, that the school shall be kept a given number of months, irrespective of the distributive share they are to receive from the town. When the school commences, the teacher is directed to keep an exact account of the attendance of each scholar during the term. At the close of the school, the expense of it is ascertained; the district's share of the town money is first applied to defray that expense, and the residue is assessed upon the parents and guardians of the scholars, according to the amount of their attendance. This proceeding is known by the name of "*mixing the money*." Although this is done by the district, without any shadow of legal authority, yet it has been generally acquiesced in;—the desire of a longer school prevailing over the question of strict, legal right. In some few instances, individuals have declined to contribute for prolonging the school,—proposing to take their children from it, after the town's money should be expended. But to defeat this purpose, the district, in some cases, has voted that the school be kept from public and from private money, in alternate weeks or fortnights; that is, the first week or fortnight from the public money, the second from the private, the third from the public again, and so on. This would virtually compel all to come into the plan of ratable contribution, because such an intermitting attendance,—one week in and the next week out,—would be nearly valueless. In some cases, all the children have been allowed to attend the school, and the tax has been remitted in regard to the poor; and thus a spirit of generosity has done much to remedy the inherent defects of the system; and the principle, that the property shall support the school, has been reverted to, in substance, after all the trouble of departing from it, in form, has been incurred. In point of policy, the mode of *mixing the money* seems even less exceptionable, than the one which is more generally adopted, in other parts of the State; viz. that of the town's voting an inadequate sum, and then for a few persons to take their children from the public schools and establish a private one for their sole benefit; or for the leading inhabitants of the districts to prolong the Common

school, at their individual expense. It is gratifying to find, that notwithstanding the great amount of money expended, last year, in the county of Barnstable, for private schools, compared with the sum raised for the public ones, yet that a majority of all the towns in that county, materially increased their appropriations over those of the preceding year ; and thus, that they are adopting the most effectual of all methods for an ultimate remedy. And, however paradoxical it may seem, it is still true, that a gradual enlargement of the town appropriations, from year to year, is the only way to diminish the aggregate of expenses for education in Common-School studies ; and the more rapidly the increase is made, the greater will be the saving in the whole expense. Each additional hundred dollars, raised by the town for public schools, will save two or three hundred in the expense for private ones, besides drawing after it the consequences of higher compensation for teachers, longer school terms, greater intelligence in the general administration of the system and more zeal for the advancement of the scholars. An enlargement of the town appropriations, therefore, is alike dictated by policy and economy.

The prostration of the energies of our school system, by this division of the funds expended to sustain it, is not the only evil which that division causes. It tends strongly to a perversion of the social feelings of the children,—to envy on the one side, and to an assumption of superiority on the other. We may moralize to children, forever, upon the duty of *doing* to others, as they would be done by ; and also, (which is within the equitable interpretation of the same divine law,) upon the duty of *feeling* towards others as they would have others feel towards them ;—or upon the duty of each one's esteeming others better than himself ; but if they are sent forth at the same hour, and pass along the same streets, to enter houses of instruction almost as different from each other as the squalid wigwam of the savage from the elegant mansions of the civilized, it is impossible, while human nature remains as it is, that feelings of alienation, of distance and discord, should not spring up and choke out their social affections. An enemy is among them sowing tares,—not in the night, but in the open day ; not while the parents are asleep, for it is the parents themselves who scatter the seed. The social and dissocial feelings of children are, to a very great extent, the natural growth of the circumstances in which they are placed ; and therefore it is, that

the circumstances, as far as possible, must be sought or avoided, out of which proper or improper feelings naturally emanate ;—and they are responsible for the result, who determine the circumstances.

The whole number of scholars attending the private schools of all kinds, last year, was less than thirty thousand ; that is, less than one-sixth part of the whole number of children in the State, between the ages of four and sixteen years. Amongst whom are these thirty thousand children destined to live, when they pass from minority to manhood ? Is not this one-sixth to receive good or suffer evil from social institutions, which the other five-sixths will mould according to their own will ? Are they not to depend, not only for social consideration and public favor, but also, to a great extent, for the security of person and property and reputation, on the feelings of the community towards them ? And is it not, therefore, the clearest policy, as well as the highest duty, to establish such relations among all the children, as will prepare them for their common destiny when men ? Besides, it is impossible to inflict any other so great an intellectual injury upon a child, as to inspire him with the pride of a superiority which is merely accidental ;—and the result is the same, whether that pride be inspired, by direct inculcation, or by surrounding him with circumstances which naturally excite it. Personal exertion is the only unfailing resource, upon which he can draw. Take away every thing else, but leave the spirit that prompts to exertion, and you leave the means of the highest worldly prosperity and honors. Take this spirit away, and he is impoverished, though left in possession of every adventitious good. The idea of superiority, derived from the casual and accidental distinctions of wealth, or parentage, or rank, seems to take away the necessity of personal exertion, and thus it destroys the sources of greatness ; and men of wealth, of rank and of conspicuous standing in society from whatsoever cause, must reconcile themselves to see their children become inferior men, and fall into inferior positions in society, notwithstanding all the labor and cost bestowed upon them, until they will provide for those children some antidote against thinking themselves superior to their fellows, on any grounds but those of the power and the will to do good. All children, born to what is commonly called a better fortune, so far from having their attention turned to that fact, need the strongest motives to counteract its influence.

These views bear directly upon the subject of private schools, especially in our country towns and villages ; and that they are beginning to be adopted, and, to some extent, acted upon, the statistics of the last Abstract give gratifying evidence. In the school year, 1838—9, the expense of tuition in this class of schools amounted to 270,462 80 ; in the year 1839—40, it fell to 241,114 20. A falling off of \$30,000 in this item, in a single year, while the amount of appropriations by the towns was simultaneously increased, an equal sum, is a fact for which I can assign no cause but the prevalence of a sounder public opinion on the expediency of bringing all the children, for their own sakes, to the same starting-post, to commence together, the journey of life.

At the same time, not only the number of students as before stated, but the amount paid for tuition, in the incorporated academies, have substantially increased. No person, having any knowledge of the relation of cause and effect, as applicable to this subject, has ever doubted, that an improvement in the condition of the Common Schools, while it would concentrate the intelligence of the community upon them, and draw over, by the offer of higher compensation, the best professional, private teachers, to the public service, would also, as a natural consequence, promote the prosperity of those institutions, which really occupy the place, and give the instruction appropriate to academies, and are not mere district schools, under a corporate name, and governed by boards of trustees, instead of a prudential committee.

TEACHERS.

Nothing but an imperative sense of duty could induce me to approach this most difficult subject ; because, to speak of the necessity of higher qualifications, in any department of business, may always be construed into an intentional disparagement of those who administer it. This would often be unjust. It would be especially so, in regard to the subject of education. If the idea of the immense power of education over individual and social welfare, and of its absolute and unconditional necessity, under political institutions like ours ;—if this grand idea be not a new one, amongst us ; still, the extent to which it is now embraced, and the depth of conviction with which it is now held, are new. None can deny that these views are now seen with a clearness and prevail to an extent, never known before ; and with the prevalence of such views, it is natural and inevitable that a sudden rise

should take place in the acknowledged standard of fitness for agents, appointed to carry on the great work. But a preparation for the office of teacher requires both labor and time. Hence there must be an interval between a knowledge of the want which leads to the demand, and the preparation by which that demand is supplied. It is this very juncture, which we have now reached. To make known these new demands, and to point out the particulars in which the improvements are to consist, implies therefore, no special disparagement ; or, if it does, it disparages the intelligence of those who, heretofore, were ignorant of the want, as much as it does the qualifications of those, who satisfied that want. What was the object, which led the founders of that most useful association, the American Institute of Instruction, ten years ago, to combine their exertions, and annually, since, to expend money, time and talent ;—what has been the object of recent legislative action, not only in this State, but in more than half the free States in the Union, but an improvement in the system of education ?—and for this purpose, the qualifications of teachers hold a place, second in importance to none. It can, therefore, only be from the instigation of a perverse and sinister mind, that any one would even whisper into the ears of teachers, that the call now made for higher qualifications, however loud or often repeated it may be, is to be construed in derogation of their past character or usefulness.

I believe there is scarcely a single instance, in the reports, where the school committee speak with universal commendation of the success of the teachers, they have approved. The praise they bestow is qualified by exceptions. Some schools are said to have made great progress in a single branch, as in grammar or reading, but to be deficient in other branches ; in other schools, the older scholars have done well, while the younger have been stationary, or retrograde ;—and thus it is alleged that the teachers are deficient, either in regard to their literary qualifications, or in their power of inspiring scholars of all ages with the love of study. In other cases, it is lamented, that, notwithstanding all the labor and expense bestowed upon the school, the scholars should have been both intellectually and morally injured ; and it is, indeed, hard, that a community should be taxed to pay for having the minds of their children darkened or perverted.*

* Mention is often made of candidates being such “as will *just* answer the law,” “as will *just pass* ;” “as are qualified to instruct in a particular district,”

In some children there is, undoubtedly, a remediless incapacity, the removal of which by the teacher would imply, not the power to improve, but the power to create ; but this is never true of all the children in a district, and, therefore, where the whole school fails to advance, the teacher ought not to look abroad or out of himself, for the cause of so great a misfortune.

FEMALE TEACHERS. It is gratifying to observe that a change is rapidly taking place, both in public sentiment and action, in regard to the employment of female teachers. The number of male teachers, in all the summer and winter schools, for the last year, was thirty-three less than for the year preceding, while the number of females was one hundred and three more. That females are incomparably better teachers for young children than males, cannot admit of a doubt. Their manners are more mild and gentle, and hence more in consonance with the tenderness of childhood. They are endowed by nature with stronger parental impulses, and this makes the society of children delightful, and turns duty into pleasure. Their minds are less withdrawn from their employment, by the active scenes of life ; and they are less intent and scheming for future honors or emoluments. As a class, they never look forward, as young men almost invariably do, to a period of legal emancipation from parental control, when they are to break away from the domestic circle and go abroad into the world, to build up a fortune for themselves ; and hence, the sphere of hope and of effort is narrower, and the whole forces of the mind are more readily concentrated upon present duties. They are also of purer morals. In the most common and notorious vices of the age, profanity, intemperance, fraud, &c., there are twenty men to one woman ; and although as life advances, the comparison grows more and more unfavorable to the male sex, yet the beginnings of vice are early, even when their developments are late ;—on this ac-

&c., &c. Now, as such a vast latitude of construction may be given to the word "qualification,"—as the word may include so much, or so little, according to the expounder,—the danger is, that when the pressure is all in favor of approval, the errors will all fall on that side, that the candidate will be approved, and, as a consequence, the children will suffer. In one report the committee say, "we have had better luck with the female teachers than with the male," as though it were a matter left to "luck," what intellectual and moral guides, the rising generation should have.

count, therefore, females are infinitely more fit than males to be the guides and exemplars of young children.

Females are beginning to be employed, to a considerable extent, in the winter schools. This practice is highly commended, in some of the committees' reports ; it is strongly discountenanced in others. With deference to those who hold these opposite opinions, I take the liberty to suggest, that no uniform rule can be laid down on the subject. A sound discretion must be exercised, and each case decided upon its own merits. In very few instances, if in any, would it be prudent to employ a young female, for her first term, in a winter school. To meet the greater difficulties of such a school, there should be, at least, the preparation of experience. So, where the quiet and harmony of the school are endangered by large and turbulent boys, the power of a sterner voice, and of a firmer hand may be necessary to overawe an insurrectionary spirit. Yet even this class of cases is the subject of discrimination. Sometimes, from false notions of honor and pride, boys would be spurred on to disobedience and open rebellion against the authority of a master, while their generous sentiments would be touched with a feeling of chivalry towards a female ; they would therefore respect a request from a mistress, though they would spurn a command from a master. But, if a dissension pervades the district on any subject in the remotest degree connected with the school, it can hardly ever be safe to place a female between the contending parties. Her influence is of a moral character ; it flourishes amid peace and union,—consisting more in the persuasion that wins, than in the power which overrules. But when the teacher has experience, when the district is harmonious, and will frown into silence the slightest whisper of mutiny from the scholars, then a female will keep quite as good a school as a man, at two-thirds of the expense, and will transfuse into the minds of her pupils, purer elements, both of conduct and character, which will extend their refining and humanizing influences far outward into society, and far onward into futurity. Some of the finest schools in the State are the result of this happy combination of circumstances.

In regard to teachers, generally, the reports of the town committees abound with admonitions to the prudential committees, and with advice to the districts to employ none but those who are good.

Some districts are charged with delay in choosing the prudential committee ; and again and again, throughout the whole body of the reports, the prudential committee are exhorted to be on the alert in their inquiries, and to secure teachers in season ; because, as it is alleged, if the committees delay, the good teachers are all preëngaged, and the districts must pay the penalty of remissness, by accepting such as can be found, at a late hour, and in such haste, as precludes deliberation. This is a view, which very naturally presents itself to the committees of the several towns, each earnest to obtain the services of an able instructor for its own schools, and, so far, regardless of the incompetency which must fall to the lot of its neighbors, in consequence of its own success ; but the whole urgency of the call proceeds upon the supposition, that the number of good teachers to be found is far less than the whole number of teachers to be employed ; and, therefore, that those who come first to the winnowing, will obtain the wheat. But this eager competition of the towns presents itself in a very different aspect, to one who takes a comprehensive survey of the great interests of education throughout the State. Such a one has no predilection for particular towns ; but having the welfare of all parts of the Commonwealth equally at heart, it is not a subject of special rejoicing to him, that one district has a good teacher, when, as a necessary consequence, other districts must accept poor ones. That all the good ones should be engaged is what he desires,—but whether in one place, or in another, is, to him quite immaterial. That any one district should be subjected to the necessity of employing an incompetent teacher, is what he deplors ; and the question which forces itself with painful intensity, upon his mind, is, how can all the districts enjoy the blessing of good teachers ?

There is, however, one great advantage in engaging teachers early in the season ; it gives them an opportunity to review their studies, and to read on the general subject of education, as preparations for entering the school.

The whole number of teachers in the public schools, last year, including both summer and winter, and males and females, was six thousand three hundred and six. As a number of these, however, were employed in the same school, both summer and winter, and as some of them may have kept two summer or two winter schools, they are

reckoned twice in this computation. On the other hand, two persons were sometimes employed for different portions of the same school. The number of different individuals could not have fallen much below six thousand. A brief consideration of a few of the qualifications essential to those who undertake the momentous task of training the children of the State, will help us to decide the question, whether the complaints of the committees, in regard to the incompetency of teachers, are captious and unfounded ; or whether they proceed from enlightened conceptions of the nature of their duties and office, and therefore require measures to supply the deficiency.

1st. A KNOWLEDGE OF COMMON-SCHOOL STUDIES.—Teachers should have a perfect knowledge of the rudimental branches which are required by law to be taught in our schools. They should understand, not only the rules, which have been prepared as guides for the unlearned, but also the principles on which the rules are founded,—those principles which lie beneath the rules, and supersede them in practice ; and from which, should the rules be lost, they could be framed anew. Teachers should be able to teach *subjects*, not manuals merely.

This knowledge should not only be thorough and critical, but it should be always ready, at command, for every exigency,—familiar like the alphabet, so that, as occasion requires, it will rise up in the mind instantaneously, and not need to be studied out, with labor and delay. For instance, it is not enough that the teacher be able to solve and elucidate an arithmetical question, by expending half an hour of school time in trying various ways to bring out the answer ; for that half hour is an important part of the school session, and the regular exercises of the school must be shortened or slurred over to repair the loss. Again, in no school can a teacher devote his whole and undivided attention to the exercises, as they successively recur. Numerous things will demand simultaneous attention. While a class is spelling or reading, he may have occasion to recall the roving attention of one scholar ; to admonish another by word or look ; to answer some question put by a third ; or to require a fourth to execute some needed service. Now, if he is not so familiar with

the true orthography of every word, that his ear will instantaneously detect an error in the spelling, he will, on all such occasions, pass by mistakes without notice, and therefore without correction, and thus interweave wrong instruction with right, through all the lessons of the school. If he is not so familiar, too, both with the rules of reading, and with the standard of pronunciation for each word, that a wrong emphasis or cadence, or a mispronounced word will jar his nerves, and recall even a wandering attention, then innumerable errors will glide by his own ear unnoticed, while they are stamped upon the minds of his pupils. These remarks apply with equal force to recitations in grammar and geography. A critical knowledge, respecting all these subjects, should be so consciously present with him, that his mind will gratefully respond to every right answer or sign, made by the scholar, and shrink from every wrong one, with the quickness and certainty of electrical attraction and repulsion. In regard to the last-named branch, geography,—a study which, in its civil or political department, is constantly mutable and progressive, the teacher should understand, and be able to explain, any material changes, which may have occurred since the last edition of his text-book ; as, for instance, the erection of Iowa into a territorial government by the last Congress ; or, during the last year, the restitution of Syria to the Turkish government through the intervention of the Four European Powers. This establishment of a link between past events and present times, this realization of things as lately done, or now doing, sheds such a strong light upon a distant scene, as makes it appear to be near us ; and thus gives to all the scholars, a new and inexpressible interest in their lessons.

However much other knowledge a teacher may possess, it is no equivalent for a mastership in the rudiments. It is not more true in architecture, than in education, that the value of the work, in every upper layer, depends upon the solidity of all beneath it. The leading, prevailing defect in the intellectual department of our schools, is a want of thoroughness,—a proneness to be satisfied with a verbal memory of rules, instead of a comprehension of principles,—with a knowledge of the names of things, instead of a knowledge of the things themselves ;—or, if some knowledge of the things is gained, it is too apt to be a knowledge of them as isolated facts, and unaccompanied by a knowledge of the relations, which subsist between

them, and bind them into a scientific whole. That knowledge is hardly worthy of the name, which stops with things, as individuals, without understanding the relations, existing between them. The latter constitutes indefinitely the greater part of all human knowledge. For instance, all the problems of plane geometry, by which heights and distances are measured, and the contents of areas and cubes ascertained, are based upon a few simple definitions, which can be committed to memory by any child in half a day. With the exception of the comets, whose number is not known, there are but thirty bodies in the whole solar system. Yet, on the relations which subsist between these thirty individual bodies, is built the stupendous science of astronomy. How worthless is the astronomical knowledge which stops with committing to memory thirty names !

At the Normal School at Barre, during the last term, the number of pupils was about fifty. This number might have been doubled, if the visitors would have consented to carry the applicants forward at once, into algebra and chemistry, and geometry and astronomy, instead of subjecting them to a thorough review of Common-School studies. One of the most cheering auguries, in regard to our schools, is the unanimity with which the committees have awarded sentence of condemnation against the practice of introducing into them the studies of the university, to the exclusion or neglect of the rudimental branches. By such a practice, a pupil foregoes all the stock of real knowledge he might otherwise acquire ; and he receives, in its stead, only a show or counterfeit of knowledge, which, with all intelligent persons, only renders his ignorance more conspicuous. A child's limbs are as well fitted, in point of strength, to play with the planets, before he can toss a ball, as his mind is to get any conception of the laws which govern their stupendous motions, before he is master of common arithmetic. For these, and similar considerations, it seems that the first intellectual qualification of a teacher is a critical thoroughness, both in rules and principles, in regard to all the branches required by law to be taught in the Common Schools ; and a power of recalling them, in any of their parts, with a promptitude and certainty, hardly inferior to that with which he could tell his own name.

2nd. **APTNESS TO TEACH.** The next principal qualification in a teacher is the *art of teaching*. This is happily expressed in the com-

mon phrase, *aptness to teach*, which in a few words, comprehends many particulars. The ability to acquire, and the ability to impart, are wholly different talents. The former may exist in the most liberal measure, without the latter. It was a remark of Lord Bacon, that "the art of well-delivering the knowledge we possess is among the secrets, left to be discovered by future generations." Dr. Watts says, "there are some very learned men, who know much themselves, but who have not the talent of communicating their knowledge."* Indeed, this fact is not now questioned by any intelligent educationist. Hence we account for the frequent complaints of the committees, that those teachers who had sustained an examination, in an acceptable manner, failed in the school room, through a want of facility in communicating what they knew. The ability to acquire is the power of understanding the subject-matter of investigation. Aptness to teach involves the power of perceiving how far a scholar understands the subject-matter to be learned, and what, in the natural order, is the next step he is to take. It involves the power of discovering and of solving at the time, the exact difficulty, by which the learner is embarrassed. The removal of a slight impediment, the drawing aside of the thinnest veil, which happens to divert his steps, or obscure his vision, is worth more to him, than volumes of lore on collateral subjects. How much does the pupil comprehend of the subject? What should his next step be? Is his mind looking towards a truth or an error? The answer to these questions must be intuitive, in the person who is apt to teach. As a dramatic writer throws himself, successively, into the characters of the drama he is composing, that he may express the ideas and emotions, peculiar to each; so the mind of a teacher should migrate, as it were, into those of his pupils, to discover what they know and feel and need; and then, supplying from his own stock, what they require, he should reduce it to such a form, and bring it within such a distance, that they

* While writing this paragraph, I received the fifth report of the Glasgow Educational Society's Normal Seminary, for 1839. It contains the following:—"There is perhaps no mistake so fatal to the proper education and training of youth, as the practical error of imagining, that because a man possesses knowledge, therefore he will be able to communicate it. The knowledge of a Newton or a Bacon would avail little, without a proper mode of communication."

can reach out and seize and appropriate it. He should never forget that intellectual truths are naturally adapted to give intellectual pleasure ; and that, by leading the minds of his pupils onward to such a position in relation to these truths, that they themselves can discover them, he secures to them the natural reward of a new pleasure with every new discovery, which is one of the strongest, as well as most appropriate incitements to future exertion.

Aptness to teach includes the presentation of the different parts of a subject, in a natural order. If a child is told that the globe is about twenty-five thousand miles in circumference, before he has any conception of the length of a mile, or of the number of units in a thousand, the statement is not only utterly useless as an act of instruction, but it will probably prevent him, ever afterwards, from gaining an adequate idea of the subject. The novelty will be gone, and yet the fact unknown. Besides, a systematic acquisition of a subject knits all parts of it together, so that they will be longer retained and more easily recalled. To acquire a few of the facts, gives us fragments only ;—and even to master all the facts, but to obtain them promiscuously, leaves what is acquired so unconnected and loose, that any part of it may be jostled out of its place and lost, or remain only to mislead.

Aptness to teach, in fine, embraces a knowledge of methods and processes. These are indefinitely various. Some are adapted to accomplish their object in an easy and natural manner ; others in a toilsome and circuitous one ;—others, again, may accomplish the object at which they aim, with certainty and despatch, but secure it by inflicting deep and lasting injuries upon the social and moral sentiments. We are struck with surprise, on learning, that, but a few centuries since, the feudal barons of Scotland, in running out the lines around their extensive domains, used to take a party of boys, and whip them, at the different posts and land-marks, in order to give them a retentive memory, as witnesses, in case of future litigation or dispute. Though this might give them a vivid recollection of localities, yet it would hardly improve their ideas of justice, or propitiate them to bear true testimony in favor of the chastiser. But do not those, who have no aptness to teach, sometimes accomplish their objects by a kindred method ?

He who is apt to teach is acquainted, not only with common meth-

ods for common minds, but with peculiar methods for pupils of peculiar dispositions and temperaments ; and he is acquainted with the principles of all methods, whereby he can vary his plan, according to any difference of circumstances. The statement has been sometimes made, that it is the object of Normal Schools to subject all teachers to one, inflexible, immutable course of instruction. Nothing could be more erroneous, for one of the great objects is, to give them a knowledge of modes, as various as the diversity of cases that may arise,—that like a skillful pilot, they may not only see the haven for which they are to steer, but know every bend in the channel that leads to it. No one is so poor in resources for difficult emergencies as they may arise, as he whose knowledge of methods is limited to the one in which he happened to be instructed. It is in this way that rude nations go on for indefinite periods, imitating what they have seen, and teaching only as they were taught.

3d. **MANAGEMENT, GOVERNMENT, AND DISCIPLINE OF A SCHOOL.**—Experience has also proved, that there is no necessary connection between literary competency, aptness to teach, and the power to manage and govern a school successfully. They are independent qualifications ; yet a marked deficiency in any one of the three, renders the others nearly valueless. In regard to the ordinary management or administration of a school, how much judgment is demanded in the organization of classes, so that no scholar shall either be clogged and retarded, or hurried forward with injudicious speed, by being matched with an unequal yoke-fellow. Great discretion is necessary in the assignment of lessons, in order to avoid, on the one hand, such shortness in the tasks, as allows time to be idle ; and, on the other, such over-assignments, as render thoroughness and accuracy impracticable, and thereby so habituate the pupil to mistakes and imperfections, that he cares little or nothing about committing them. Lessons, as far as it is possible, should be so adjusted to the capacity of the scholar, that there should be no failure in a recitation, not occasioned by culpable neglect. The sense of shame, or of regret for ignorance, can never be made exquisitely keen, if the lessons given are so long, or so difficult, as to make failures frequent. When “bad marks,” as they are called, against a scholar, become common, they not only lose their salutary force, but every addition to them debases his character, and

carries him through a regular course of training, which prepares him to follow in the footsteps of those convicts, who are so often condemned, that at length they care nothing for the ignominy of the sentence. Yet all this may be the legitimate consequence of being unequally mated, or injudiciously tasked. It is a sad sight in any school, to see a pupil marked for a deficiency, without any blush of shame, or sign of guilt ; and it is never done with impunity to his moral character.

The preservation of order, together with the proper despatch of business, requires a mean, between the too much and the too little, in all the evolutions of the school, which it is difficult to hit. When classes leave their seats for the recitation-stand, and return to them again, or when the different sexes have a recess, or the hour of intermission arrives ;—if there be not some order and succession of movement, the school will be temporarily converted into a promiscuous rabble, giving both the temptation and the opportunity for committing every species of indecorum and aggression. In order to prevent confusion, on the other hand, the operations of the school may be conducted with such military formality and procrastination ;—the second scholar not being allowed to leave his seat, until the first has reached the door, or the place of recitation, and each being made to walk on tiptoe to secure silence,—that a substantial part of every school session will be wasted, in the wearisome pursuit of an object worth nothing when obtained.

When we reflect, how many things are to be done each half day, and how short a time is allotted for their performance, the necessity of system in regard to all the operations of the school, will be apparent. System compacts labor ; and when the hand is to be turned to an almost endless variety of particulars, if system does not preside over the whole series of movements, the time allotted to each will be spent in getting ready to perform it. With lessons to set ; with so many classes to hear ; with difficulties to explain ; with the studious to be assisted ; the idle to be spurred ; the transgressors to be admonished or corrected ; with the goers and comers to observe ;—with all these things to be done, no considerable progress can be made, if one part of the wheel is not coming up to the work, while another is going down. And if order do not pervade the school, as

a whole, and in all its parts, all is lost ; and this is a very difficult thing ;—for it seems as though the school were only a point, rescued out of a chaos that still encompasses it, and is ready, on the first opportunity, to break in and reoccupy its ancient possession. As it is utterly impracticable for any committee to prepare a code of regulations coextensive with all the details, which belong to the management of a school, it must be left with the teacher ; and hence the necessity of skill in this item of the long list of his qualifications.

The government and discipline of a school demands qualities still more rare, because the consequences of error, in these, are still more disastrous. What caution, wisdom, uprightness, and sometimes, even intrepidity, are necessary in the administration of punishment. After all other means have been tried, and tried in vain, the chastisement of pupils found to be otherwise incorrigible, is still upheld by law, and sanctioned by public opinion. But it is the last resort, the ultimate resource, acknowledged, on all hands, to be a relic of barbarism, and yet authorized, because the community, although they feel it to be a great evil, have not yet devised and applied an antidote. Through an ignorance of the laws of health, a parent may so corrupt the constitution of his child, as to render poison a necessary medicine ; and through an ignorance of the laws of mind, he may do the same thing in regard to punishment. When the arts of health and of education are understood, neither poison nor punishment will need to be used, unless in most extraordinary cases. The discipline of former times was inexorably stern and severe, and even if it were wished, it is impossible now to return to it. The question is, what can be substituted, which, without its severity, shall have its efficiency.

But how important is the relation, in which a teacher stands towards a supposed offender. If the grounds of suspicion are presumptive only, how nice the balance of judgment in which they should be weighed, lest, on the one hand, injustice be done by bringing a false accusation against the innocent ; or lest, on the other, a real offender should escape, through mistaken confidence and charity. If there be sufficient ground to put a pupil upon trial, the teacher, in his own person, combines the characters of the law-maker, by whom the rule, supposed to be transgressed, was enacted ; of the counsel

who examines the witnesses ; of the jury, who decide upon the facts ; and of the judge, interpreting his own law, and awarding sentence according to his own discretion. And after all this, he is the executive officer, inflicting the penalty himself has awarded, unless that penalty is remitted by the pardoning power, which also resides in him. Often, too, this representative or depository of so many functions, is himself the person supposed to be offended ; and thus he presents the spectacle of a party in interest, trying his own cause, and avenging alleged insults against his own dignity. If he suffers the out-door consequences of inflicting punishment to enter his mind, his fears will become his counsellors, and they will be as false as his pride. This specification is not given for the purpose of excepting to that usage, which makes the teacher the sovereign of the school room, but only to show what danger of error there must be, when teachers are employed, who have had neither experience nor instruction, and whose judgment, years have not yet begun to ripen. Are there not teachers, to whom all the children in the district are entrusted, for their education, and for all the momentous and enduring interests connected with that word, to whom scarcely a parent in the district would surrender the care and management of his own children, for the same length of time ? Yet how much less incapable would the teacher be of governing and controlling a family of five or six children, than a school of fifty or sixty ? Every child ought to find, at school, the affection and the wisdom, which he has left at home ; or, if he has left neither wisdom nor affection at home, there is so much more need, that he should find them at school.

A school should be governed with a steady hand, not only during the same season, but from year to year ;—substantially the same extent of indulgence being allowed, and the same restrictions imposed. It is injurious to the children, to alternate between the extremes of an easy and a sharp discipline. It is unjust, also, for one teacher to profit by letting down the discipline of a school, and thus throw upon his successor, the labor of raising it up to its former level.

4th. **GOOD BEHAVIOR.**—In two words, the statute opens, to all teachers, an extensive field of duty, by ordaining that all the youth in the schools shall be taught “*good behavior.*” The framers of

the law were aware, how rapidly good or bad manners mature into good or bad morals ; they saw that good manners have not only the negative virtue of restraining from vice, but the positive one of leading, by imperceptible gradations, towards the practice of almost all the social virtues. The effects of civility or discourtesy, of gentlemanly or ungentlemanly deportment, are not periodical or occasional, merely, but of constant recurrence ; and all the members of society have a direct interest in the manners of each of its individuals ; because each one is a radiating point,—the centre of a circle, which he fills with pleasure or annoyance, not only for those who voluntarily enter it, but for those also, who, in the promiscuous movements of society, are caught within its circumference. Good behavior includes the elements of that equity, benevolence, conscience, which, in their great combinations, the moralist treats of in his books of ethics, and the legislator enjoins in his codes of law. The school room and its play-ground, next to the family table, are the places, where the selfish propensities come into most direct collision with social duties. Here, then, a right direction should be given to the growing mind. The surrounding influences, which are incorporated into its new thoughts and feelings, and make part of their substance, are too minute and subtile to be received in masses, like nourishment ;—they are rather imbibed into the system, unconsciously, by every act of respiration, and are constantly insinuating themselves into it, through all the avenues of the senses. If, then, the manners of the teacher are to be imitated by his pupils,—if he is the glass, at which they “do dress themselves,” how strong is the necessity, that he should understand those nameless and innumerable practices, in regard to deportment, dress, conversation, and all personal habits, that constitute the difference between a gentleman and a clown. We can bear some oddity, or eccentricity in a friend whom we admire for his talents, or revere for his virtues ; but it becomes quite a different thing, when the oddity, or the eccentricity, is to be a pattern or model, from which fifty or a hundred children are to form their manners. It was well remarked, by the ablest British traveller who has ever visited this country, that amongst us, “every male above twenty-one years of age, claims to be a sovereign. He is, therefore, bound to be a gentleman.”

5th. **MORALS.** On the indispensable, all-controlling requisite of

moral character, I have but a single suggestion to make, in addition to those admirable views on this subject, which are scattered up and down through the committees' reports. This suggestion relates to the responsibility resting on those individuals, who give letters of recommendation, or certificates of character, to candidates for schools. Probably, one half,—perhaps more,—of all the teachers in the State are comparatively strangers, in the respective places where they are employed. Hence the examining committees, in the absence of personal knowledge, must rely upon testimonials exhibited before them. These consist of credentials, brought from abroad, which are sometimes obtained through the partialities of relationship, interest, or sect ; or even given, lest a refusal should be deemed an unneighborly act, and the applicant should be offended or alienated by a repulse. But are interests of such vast moment as the moral influence of teachers upon the rising generation, to be sacrificed to private considerations of relationship, or predilection, or any selfish or personal motive whatever ? It may be very agreeable to a person to receive the salary of a teacher, but this fact has no tendency to prove his fitness for the station ;—if so, the poor-house would be the place to inquire for teachers ;—and what claim to conscience, or benevolence can that man have, who jeopardes the permanent welfare of fifty or a hundred children, for the private accommodation of a friend ? In regard to pecuniary transactions, it is provided by the laws of the land, that whoever recommends another as responsible and solvent, becomes himself liable for the debts which may be contracted, under a faith in the recommendation, should it prove to have been falsely given. The recommendation is held to be a warranty, and it charges its author with all the losses incurred, within the scope of a fair construction. It is supposed, that, without this responsibility, the expanded business of trade and commerce would be restricted to persons, possessing a mutual knowledge of each others' trustworthiness or solvency. But why should the precious and enduring interests of morality be accounted of minor importance, and protected by feebler securities, than common traffic ? Why should the man who has been defrauded by an accredited pedler, have his remedy against the guarantor, while he, who is instrumental in inflicting upon a district, and upon all the children in a district, the curse of a dissolute,

vicious teacher, escapes the condign punishment of general execration? In the contemplation of the law, the school committee are sentinels stationed at the door of every schoolhouse in the State, to see that no teacher ever crosses its threshold, who is not clothed, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, in garments of virtue; and they are the enemies of the human race,—not of contemporaries only, but of posterity,—who, from any private or sinister motive, strive to put these sentinels to sleep, in order that one, who is profane, or intemperate, or addicted to low associations, or branded with the stigma of any vice, may elude the vigilance of the watchmen, and be installed over the pure minds of the young, as their guide and exemplar. If none but teachers of pure tastes, of good manners, of exemplary morals, had ever gained admission into our schools, neither the school rooms, nor their appurtenances would have been polluted, as some of them now are, with such ribald inscriptions, and with the carvings of such obscene emblems, as would make a heathen blush. Every person, therefore, who endorses another's character, as one befitting a school teacher, stands before the public as his moral bondsman and sponsor, and should be held to a rigid accountability.

It will ever remain an honor to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, that, among all the reports of its school committees, for the last year, so many of which were voluminous and detailed, and, a majority of which, probably, were prepared by clergymen, belonging to all the various denominations in the State, there was not one, which advocated the introduction of sectarian instruction or sectarian books into our public schools; while, with accordant views,—as a single voice coming from a single heart,—they urge, they insist, they demand, that the great axioms of a Christian morality shall be sedulously taught, and that the teachers shall themselves, be patterns of the virtues, they are required to inculcate.

The limits proper for a report debar me from pursuing the topics under this head, into further detail. It may, however, be briefly observed, on the one hand, that there are some delinquencies on the part of a teacher, such as the commencement of a school without having submitted to an examination by the committee, as required by law; the unauthorized introduction of books into the school, which are not contained in the list, furnished by the committee; and the open dis-

regard of directions given by the committee, in respect to the classification or management of the school,—all, or either of which prove that the teacher is destitute of good principles, that he is capable of a wilful violation or evasion of the laws of the State, and which, therefore, demonstrate his unfitness to fill a place, where a spirit of subordination, and of obedience to legitimate authority, is among the lessons to be taught by practice as well as by precept. On the other hand, I can only refer to those eminent advantages which would accrue, from employing a teacher, who in addition to the qualifications enumerated in the statute book should possess a mind filled with stores of knowledge, collateral to the branches pursued in the school ; so that the pupils, from day to day, might not only be enlivened and instructed by apposite anecdote and impressive illustration, but be led to emulate the attainments, which it is their delight to witness in him. So too, if, from the extent of the teacher's acquirements, and the worth and dignity of his character, his society should be sought by all the families in the neighborhood, and, as he visited from house to house, he should exhibit a living example of those powers of instructing and of pleasing, which are derived from intellectual resources and benevolence of disposition, he would imbue the youth of the district with the love of knowledge and the desire of excellence, and thus lay the foundation of tastes, habits and institutions, which would shed their pure and ennobling influences over a long tract of future time. It is an authentic anecdote of the late Dr. Nathaniel Bowditch, that when, at the age of twenty-one years, he sailed on an East Indian voyage, he took pains to instruct the crew of the ship, in the art of navigation. Every sailor on board, during that voyage, became afterwards a captain of a ship. Such are the natural consequences of associating with a man, whose mind is intent upon useful knowledge and whose actions are born of benevolence.

BOOKS.

When the scholars meet the teacher appointed for the school, they must be provided with books. It is, of course, presumed, that the school committee have seasonably complied with the law in prescribing a list of books, so that it will be universally known what books are required. As our schools are at present conducted, books are the store-houses or reservoirs, whence the scholars draw their daily

supplies of knowledge. Excepting the oral instruction, given by the teacher, the pupils must derive knowledge directly from books, or originate it themselves, or leave the school without it. The teacher cannot give much oral instruction to those who do not coöperate with him by studying text books ; the amount of useful knowledge, which the pupils can themselves originate, is indefinitely small ; and therefore, the parents, who send their children to school without books, ought not to complain if they leave it without knowledge. To borrow a book of a neighbor's child, and thereby deprive him of the use of it, is not merely like borrowing one of his utensils or implements,—it is like borrowing his well-stored granary or barn. That deficiency of books which leads to borrowing, is, in this State, left without excuse, because it is here provided by law, that when any parent is pecuniarily unable to furnish the requisite books for his children, they shall be supplied at the expense of the town ;—the Legislature wisely judging that the present cost of suitable books and instruction for such children, is not to be compared with the prospective expense of poor-houses and prisons. This law is evidently much better observed now than it was three years ago, when the attention of the public was first called to it, though there are still cases of non-compliance.

A uniformity of school books for scholars of similar ages and attainments, is so important, that, although it was dwelt upon, at considerable length, in my First Annual Report, I wish, for a moment, to recur to it again. Uniformity in books belongs to classification of scholars ; without uniformity, indeed, classification is impossible, and without classification, a school loses its collective character, and becomes a promiscuous company of individuals. Should a teacher hear his scholars recite, individually,—the first in geography, the second in grammar, the third in arithmetic, and so on, all must see the inevitable waste of time, and the spiritless routine of the exercises. But one scholar may recite in geography, the next in grammar, and the third in arithmetic, and so forth, just as well as two can recite together from two books of geography, one of which treats, first, of mathematical or astronomical geography, then of civil or political, and then of physical ; while the other takes up the political divisions of the earth, one by one, but embraces all the civil, physical, and mathematical descriptions under the successive political heads.

It seems not to be considered, that, though all the books may be labelled 'geography,' yet that a different arrangement of their contents makes them different books, and renders simultaneous teaching from them impossible.

Whatever defeats classification destroys the power of the teacher ; and the loss of power increases in far more than a direct ratio ;—the progression being rather geometrical than arithmetical. If the teacher is compelled to divide the time, which he should devote to one class, into two or three parts, in order to hear two or three classes, in the same study, but with different books, all his opportunity for illustration and for oral instruction is taken away, because his whole time is occupied in hastening through the lesson. But if, as has sometimes been the case, the teacher is compelled to divide the time for a recitation in one branch, into six or eight parts, because there are six or eight different kinds of books, there will be hardly power enough left to be the subject of computation. The energies of the most efficient teacher will be broken down under such a system, or rather such want of system. For many other evils, an ingenious teacher may devise some palliation, some mitigating alternative ; but for this, there is but one remedy, viz : a conformity with the law, by the school committee, and a conformity with the committee's directions, by the parents and guardians.

A very simple expedient, adopted in many towns, has resulted in the desired reform ; and by means of it, the end is attained, without exciting the opposition of parents. Let a list of the books prescribed by the committee, be entered on the Register which is to be given to each teacher, at the opening of the school ; or let a list be given to the teacher, at the time of his examination, which it will then be his duty to enter upon the Register ; or, as some committees do, let a copy of this list be hung up in the school room, as a general advertisement to the district. Let all the booksellers in the town, or in the neighboring towns, if any, where the parents go to purchase school books, be furnished with copies of the same list. These booksellers, being made acquainted with the kinds of books prescribed for the schools, will readily conclude that they can sell more of the approved than of the unapproved kinds ; they will be disposed, therefore, from motives of interest, to procure the former ; and the

right kinds of books, being more accessible than the wrong, will naturally tend towards the school room by a sort of outward pressure as well as by a gravitation within, and will soon become its sole occupants. When a uniformity is thus established throughout the town, not only will all the mischiefs above described, be avoided, but a poor family, to whom the expense of school books is sometimes a serious burden, can remove from one district to another in the same town, without either buying a new set of books, or aggravating the evil of diversity which may already exist in the school, by carrying in its old ones.

By the 19th section of the 23d chapter of the Revised Statutes, school committees are authorized to purchase class books, at the expense of the town, and to establish depositories for them, where they shall be sold at such prices as just to reimburse the expense. The adoption of this plan, also, would soon result in a uniformity of books in the schools.

SCHOOL APPARATUS AND SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

The utility of apparatus and libraries, as instruments of instruction, and as means of general improvement, having been spoken of, heretofore, at great length, I will only add, that observation and the testimony of all intelligent teachers and educationists, conspire to prove, that the children who are destitute of these aids, do not make half the progress they otherwise would ; and thus are passing away the years, which are never to return, without those means of knowledge and of usefulness, which a slight encouragement, on the part of the State, such as was recommended by the Board, in their report of last year, would place within the reach of the entire rising generation.

In the year 1838, under the recommendation of Governor Marcy, the Legislature of New York appropriated, from the school fund, \$55,000 annually, for three years, to the purchase of District-School Libraries, on condition that the towns would raise an equal amount for the same purpose. In 1839, under the administration of Governor Seward, the appropriation was extended on the same conditions, for a further term of years ; and, in the late message of the last-named

governor, it is said, that almost every district in the State, is now in possession of a library ;—the number of volumes already amounting, in the whole, to about one million. By an inquiry, made last year, in regard to the schools in Massachusetts, it was found that there were but about ten thousand volumes, in all the District-School Libraries in the State.

“ Within the five years limited by the law,” says Governor Seward, “ there will have been expended, in the purchase of books, more than half of a million of dollars. Although an injudicious choice of books is sometimes made, these libraries generally include history and biography, voyages and travels, works on natural history and the physical sciences, treatises upon agriculture, commerce, manufactures and the arts, and judicious selections from modern literature. Henceforth, no citizen who shall have improved the advantages offered by our Common Schools, and the District Libraries, will be without some scientific knowledge of the earth, its physical condition and phenomena, the animals that inhabit it, the vegetables that clothe it with verdure, and the minerals under its surface, the physiology, and the intellectual powers of man, the laws of mechanics, and their practical uses, those of chemistry and their application to the arts, the principles of moral and political economy, the history of nations, and especially that of our own country, the progress and triumph of the democratic principle in the governments on this continent, and the prospects of its ascendancy throughout the world, the trials and faith, valor and constancy of our ancestors, with the inspiring examples of benevolence, virtue and patriotism exhibited in the lives of the benefactors of mankind. The fruits of this enlightened and beneficent enterprise are chiefly to be gathered by our successors. But the present generation will not be altogether unrewarded. Although many of our citizens may pass the District Library, heedless of the treasure it contains, the unpretending volumes will find their way to their fire-side, diffusing knowledge, increasing domestic happiness, and promoting public virtue.”

It surely is a subject for rejoicing, that the youth of any portion of our common country should enjoy the aids to learning, the incitements to virtue, and the restraints from temptation, furnished by a library of good books ; for it is as though the distinguished authors of those books, together with the wise and good men whose lives and deeds they record, should re-appear upon the earth, and again come and take up their residence among men, and should proffer their counsel and guidance, to enlighten, to instruct, to please, to persuade all, or any of those who would seek society and communion with them. But is it

not matter of regret, if not of humiliation, that while the children of a sister and a border State, are enjoying these inestimable privileges, the children of Massachusetts,—a State, which has taken the lead in so many noble enterprises of benevolence and patriotism,—that these children, to whom we are bound by all the ties of consanguinity and duty, should be destitute of equal means of material, and of mental improvement ?

CONSTANCY AND PUNCTUALITY OF ATTENDANCE.

After the territory of the State has been judiciously districted ; good schoolhouses prepared ; the scholars all provided, both with the requisite number and proper kinds of books, and the town has made appropriations, sufficiently liberal to command the services of well-qualified teachers ;—after all these preliminaries have been attended to, *the power of money ceases*. Up to this point, the possession of property and a spirit of liberality in bestowing it, are indispensable, but here their agency terminates. The schools here pass, as it were, under a new jurisdiction,—from material to moral influences ; and if not cherished by the latter, they might as well have never been founded. So far, it is external organization, the preparation of an outward form, merely ; but it is yet a cold, inert, dead mass,—a body of clay. A vitality, a genial warmth, a living principle of energy, are now to be infused, and spread through every fibre of this organized frame, or all the skill and cost, which have been expended in its formation, will be lost ; or, what is far worse, and perhaps far more probable, that body will corrupt, and in its corruption, engender a thousand pernicious forms of life. Moral power is now to be added to pecuniary, or the pecuniary had better never been exerted.

Under this head, the first thing in the order of time, if not the first in point of importance, is the constant and punctual attendance of the scholars. Without authentic information on the subject of irregularity in attendance, the extent to which it has prevailed would have been wholly incredible. According to the school census of last year, the whole number of children in the State, between the ages of four and sixteen, was one hundred and seventy-nine thousand two hundred and sixty-eight, 179,268

The average attendance during the summer of the same year, (1839-40,) was 92,698

Do. during the winter,	111,844
Of the number attending, who were under four years of age, there were	7,844
Do. over sixteen years of age,	11,834

 19,678

If the children under four years of age, who attended school, are deducted from the aggregate of attendance in summer, and those over sixteen years, from the aggregate of attendance in winter, the average attendance of those between four and sixteen, will stand thus ;

For summer,	84,854
For winter,	100,010

And allowing twelve thousand, as the number of the children who derive their whole education from academies and private schools, and therefore, are not dependent upon the Common Schools, at all ; and deducting this number from the number of children in the State, who are between the ages of four and sixteen years, (thus 179,268—12,000 = 167,268,) and the proportion of those who attend the Common Schools, in summer, compared with the whole number, dependent upon those schools, is as 84,854 to 167,268, or a very small fraction more than one half ;—and the proportion of those who attend the same schools, in winter, compared with the whole number dependent upon them, is as 100,010 to 167,268, or about ten-seventeenths only.

One striking aspect of this lamentable fact, is, the waste of money which it proves. The amount raised by taxes, last year, for teachers' wages and board, and fuel for the schools, was \$477,221 24. Of the portion of this sum which was expended for the summer schools, about one half was lost ; and of the portion expended for the winter schools, about seven-seventeenths, through irregularity in the attendance of the scholars ;—that is, of the \$477,221 24, raised for the support of our public schools, more than two hundred thousand dollars was directly thrown away, by this voluntary abandonment of privileges. Nor, in this computation, is any thing included for interest on the cost of schoolhouses ; for the loss of an equal proportion of the amount contributed for public schools, (\$37,269 74) ; for an

equal proportion, also, of the income, (about \$20,000,) of the State school fund ; of the income also, (15,270 89,) of local funds for public schools ; and of such portions of the income of the surplus revenue as individual towns have appropriated for the support of the schools. Vast, enormous, as the main item of the pecuniary loss, is, a proportional loss from these sources, (which, in the whole amount to more than \$75,000,) would materially enlarge it. If made out with the exactness of a business account, it would startle every business man in the community. Is it a subject for less surprise and regret, because it is an education account ? What manufacturing, or other business establishment could prosper, if its laborers should absent themselves for a corresponding proportion of the time ? What a direful calamity it would be justly deemed, if some wide-spreading epidemic should visit the State, from year to year, and deprive its children of an equal amount of their school privileges ? It is well remarked in one of the reports, that the promulgation of a law, which should deprive the children of so noble a boon, would produce a stamp-act ferment.

Who, beforehand, could have deemed it possible, that a people, so renowned for the virtues of frugality and economy ;—for their skill in turning limited means to a great account, would have tolerated this extent of wastefulness ? The fact can be explained only on the ground, that we were unaware of its existence. A parent who surmounts no obstacles to get his children daily to school, or who keeps them at home to subserve the pettiest convenience, has no conception, how rapidly the column of absences lengthens, nor of the amount of its footing at the end of the term. He does not see that for every day's absence of his child, so much mental nourishment is withheld, his growth so much retarded, and that he is preparing to send out that child into the world, an intellectual dwarf.

But with the industrious habits of our community, this amount of money can be re-earned ; indeed, it bears no proportion to the annual products of our labor and skill. But an item of loss is involved, which neither labor nor skill can ever repair. The *time* is irrevocable. The spring-season of human life, once past, cannot be restored. The seed-time lost, the harvest also is lost. This forfeiture is without redemption.

The period, during which, as a general rule, our children attend

school, viz : between the ages of four and sixteen years, is twelve years. The proportion of twelve years corresponding with this amount of absences, is more than five years ; and, therefore, the children, on an average, for so much of the period of life that should be sacredly devoted to education, are deprived of its benefits. It must also, be remembered that this deduction is not made from an entire year, but from the period of seven months and ten days, which was, last year, the average length of the schools ; so that schools, originally far too short, are cut down to a little more than half their apparent length, and so much, even of a scanty mental subsistence is taken away. When Dr. Franklin said, "Time is money," he referred to adults ; with children, time is more valuable than money, it is education.

Our law, in establishing the legal age of majority, or period of emancipation from parental control, at twenty-one years, has followed the clear indications of nature. The period of minority and tutelage which precedes this age, is necessary for the growth and preparation, required for the labors and duties of manhood. And the indications of nature are equally clear in regard to the mind. The young mind needs the instruction and guidance of more mature minds ;—it needs instruments and aids, which it is incapable of preparing for itself, nay, of the very existence of which it is itself ignorant, until the full period, or nearly the full period, of legal minority has passed. Were it not so, the young of the human race would have come to their bodily and mental maturity, like the young of the inferior animals, at an earlier period,—at the end of a month, or a year, or, at furthest, at the end of a few years. It is this extensive and irrevocable portion of early life, proved by all observation and analogy to be so essential to a preparation for the duties of manhood, that is withdrawn ; and yet, when these neglected children shall arrive at the state of manhood, the duties belonging to that state will be required of them, or society, in some, or in all of its relations, must suffer the penalty.

The main trunk of this evil of non-attendance sends off numerous branches, each of which is laden with its own peculiar kind of bitter fruit. One effect is, the injustice done to the teacher. If the Register of the school bears the names of seventy different scholars, while the school is reduced by absences to an average of fifty, the common inference is, that, although seventy is a greater number than

one teacher can properly instruct, yet that he must be in fault, if he does not teach the fifty in a competent manner, and advance them at a rapid rate. And yet a school averaging fifty scholars, reduced to that number from seventy, by absences, is far more difficult, both to instruct and to govern, than a school of a hundred, all of whom attend regularly. A teacher, therefore, ought to be excused, not blamed, if he does not carry a small number of scholars rapidly forward, if the number is made small, by irregularity in attendance ; yet those who send their children most irregularly are among the first to complain that they make little progress. The law, (under a certain condition,) requires the employment of an assistant teacher in all the public schools, when the average number of scholars is fifty. But the principal teacher needs an assistant quite as much, when a school of fifty is reduced to an average of thirty, by absences, as when it rises to seventy by a regular attendance of all the scholars belonging to it.

Again, if parents keep a child at home, for two or three days, or for three or four half days, in a week, he must, at least, be stationary, while the class to which he belongs is advancing. Hence, on his return to the school, he is not in a suitable condition to rejoin his class. But, generally, there is no other class in which he can be placed ; and the formation of new classes to meet these cases would soon destroy classification altogether ; because the classes would soon become as numerous as the scholars ; and the school which should march onward in regular divisions, would be reduced to a promiscuous throng of stragglers. Unless in extraordinary cases, therefore, the absent scholar must resume his place in the class ; but, as the correct understanding of each successive step in his studies, depends upon his having mastered the preceding steps, he is almost necessarily incapacitated for intelligent study and good recitations. Out of this come, not merely loss of knowledge, but habits of incorrectness. The pupil, accustomed to failures and mistakes, is hardened into indifference ; he loses the greatest incitement to study,—the pleasure of understanding his lessons ; becomes careless, mischievous, disobedient ; draws down upon himself the displeasure of the teacher, perhaps punishment ; has all his associations established, adverse to learning ; looks for pleasure elsewhere ; is disgusted with the school ;

and, as soon as possible, forfeits its privileges by abandonment,—the victim of irregular attendance.

The previous half day, when a child expects to be absent, and the half day after he has been so, are worth but little, even with good scholars. A child must have an almost inconceivable love of the school to desire to be there, when he knows that his ignorance of the lessons is to be put in direct and public contrast with the knowledge of his class-mates ; and he must have an almost incredible love of knowledge to derive any gratification from the broken fragments of it, which he can obtain at these irregular intervals. The spirit of pride, which would prompt him to stay away from the final examination of the school, lest he should be questioned upon parts of a study, which he had never seen, or upon parts dependent upon what he had never seen, would promise as much for the character of the future man, as the spirit of indifference that could tamely bear the exposure.

Irregularity of attendance in any one member of a class, is an act of injustice to every other member of it. After an absence, whether longer or shorter, the pupil, on his return, must inevitably learn his lessons in a very imperfect manner. He occupies double his share of the time at a recitation ; he requires double the amount of explanations from the teacher, and these explanations having been previously given, are not necessary for the others. Hence, the absent scholars are a perpetual clog upon the class. The advanced body must wait, while the laggards are coming up ; and thus not only the absentees themselves, but the reputation of the teacher, the condition of the school, the character of the district, are all made to suffer the consequences of the guilt of unnecessary absence.

The effects of a want of punctuality, though less in extent, are similar in kind ; co-existing, they are a mutual aggravation.

But, without entering into further detail respecting the losses, embarrassments and injustice, resulting from this common delinquency, it becomes a matter of primary importance to inquire what measures can be adopted to dry up a fountain of mischief, which sends forth such copious streams.

The first thing to be done, is, to render the schoolhouse, both by its external appearance, and its internal conveniences, a place of attraction ;—or, at any rate, to prevent it from being a place, odious to the sight, and painful to the bodies and limbs of the pupils. The

excuses and contrivances of children to stay away from a repulsive, unhealthful schoolhouse, seem to be preventives, which Nature, in her wise economy, has provided, to escape the infliction of permanent evils.

The teacher can do much, in various ways, to diminish the cases of absence and tardiness. When the question is debated, at the evening fire-side, or at the breakfast table, whether a child shall stay at home, or go to school ; the child has a voice and a vote, and often the casting vote, in its decision. If he loves the school, he will be an able advocate for the expediency of attending it. If errands, or any little household services are to be done, the child will rise an hour earlier, or sit up an hour later, or bestir himself with greater activity to accomplish them, that he may attend the school. For this object, he will forego a family holiday, postpone the reception or the making of a visit, endure summer's heat, or brave winter's cold. On the contrary, if the pupil looks towards the school with aversion ; if his heart sinks within him, when the name of the teacher is mentioned, or his image is excited, then every pretence for absence will be magnified, and invention will be active in fabricating excuses. In the former case, he would almost feign to be well when he was sick ; here, he will feign to be sick when he is well. Hence it will very often happen, that the pleas or excuses of the pupil himself will determine the question of going or staying ; and it depends primarily upon the teacher which way this steady and powerful bias shall incline.

During the first part of the school term, and while the habits of the pupils are forming, a skilful teacher may do much towards inspiring a laudable pride in the scholars, in regard to constancy and promptness. He can cause a public opinion to be spread through the school, that absence or tardiness, without the strongest reasons, is a stigma on the delinquent, a dishonorable abandonment of the post of duty. When errors are committed, or difficulties felt, in consequence of either of these causes, he can point out the relation between the cause and its effect, and warn against a repetition. To save the feelings of a child who comes late, or after a half day's absence, and renders a valid excuse, he can acquit him before the school, of the apparent neglect. He can refer to the state of the Register in a brief remark at the close of the day ; taking occasion,

if the attendance is full, to commend the scholars for it,—to express his regret and mortification, if it is not ;—but always so measuring and attempering his blame and his praise, that none shall be disheartened by the severity of the former, and that the latter shall not become valueless by its superabundance. If regularity and punctuality could be secured, during a four months' school, by expending an entire week in this way, at its beginning, the loss would be repaid, seven-fold, before its close. If the teachers have not consideration enough to speak, on these subjects, to their pupils ; how can they expect that the pupils, unprompted, will originate proper views concerning their importance ?

There is one act of justice, which a teacher, who demands punctuality, should never fail of rendering. Let him observe the golden rule, and when he demands punctuality of his pupils, be punctual himself,—punctual, not only in the hour of commencing his school, but in the hour of closing it. Pupils have a sense of justice on this subject ;—if the regular intermission is an hour, and the afternoon session commences at one o'clock, they want to be dismissed at 12. In this respect, let the teacher bestow what he demands, and enforce his precept by his example ;—or, at least, when the morning or the evening hour arrives for dismissing the school, let him bring its exercises to a pause, and give his pupils an option to retire or to remain. Years of mere talk are often lost upon children, while a practical lesson is never without its effect.

Some teachers have adopted the plan of sending to the parents and guardians of all the scholars, weekly reports, or cards, containing an account of all cases of absence or tardiness. In some instances, these cards contain, also, a description of the quality of recitations, of the general deportment of the children, or whatever else the teacher desires the parent or guardian to be acquainted with.

To secure a prompt attendance at the opening of the school, each half day, some teachers make it their practice, during the first five or ten minutes of the school, to have an exercise in vocal music, or to relate some useful and instructive anecdote, or to read an interesting incident from a biography, or to give a description of a curious fact in natural history ; or, where there is apparatus, to perform, occasionally, a striking experiment, and explain to what department of business or the arts it is related ;—to show the pupils, for instance,

that, in an exhausted receiver, a feather falls as rapidly as a stone ; that without air, gunpowder will not burn ; how a steam-engine is made, or a rainbow formed. Why should all the curiosity of children be pent up for months, to vent itself, at last, on the occasion of raree-shows, circus-riding, or militia musters ?

The teacher ought also to visit the parents of children who attend irregularly, and kindly and affectionately to expostulate with them on the irremediable injury they are inflicting on their offspring, both by the time they lose, and the bad habits they form.

In several of the larger towns in the State, the school committees have enacted positive regulations, excluding for the forenoon or afternoon session, all who come late ; and for the residue of the term, all who are absent, unless from sickness or some other disabling cause, for a fixed number of days, or half days. There may be some objections to this course,—such as the fact, that truant-dispositioned boys, may contrive to be absent the requisite number of days, or half days, for the very purpose of being excluded afterwards ; but almost any other evil is less than the combined influence of the innumerable throng that follow in the train of a general irregularity and tardiness. For most of the scholars, this last mentioned method is very effectual. It is the practice of many of the lyceums in the State to close the doors of the lecture room at a given hour ; and rail-road cars and steam-boats have a fixed time for starting,—the consequence of which is that every body is punctual ; and, were all the gains of this punctuality added together, it would be found, that years of time are saved, daily, by the regulation.

Some towns, in order to bring the force of a pecuniary motive to bear upon the subject, distribute the school money among the districts, not in the ratio of the children, between four and sixteen years of age, but in the ratio of their attendance upon the schools.

Although teachers as a body, can do more than any other class in the community to abate the evils of inconstant and tardy attendance ; although school committees can do something through the instrumentality of school regulations, and even towns can make their appropriations of money subserve the same end ; yet neither of these, nor all of them united, can complete the work. The final, authoritative decision, in each case, rests with parents. They, therefore, should be appealed to with the most earnest and importunate solicitations, not

to be guilty of so great cruelty to their own children, of so great injustice towards the teacher and towards their neighbors, as to cause or suffer those children, except in cases of imperious necessity, to be absent from the school, a single day of the term, or a single hour of the day. From time immemorial, in all schools, truantship has been regarded as a high offence in a pupil, and forbidden under the sanction of severe, corporal punishment; but it is difficult to see why an unnecessary absence from school, at the pleasure of the child, is worse than an unnecessary absence, at the pleasure of the parent. The real cause of the difficulty must be, that parents are not aware of its existence, and of the manifold mischiefs it involves. Until recently, even the well-informed friends of education were not apprized of its magnitude; as, before the use of the Register, no authentic means of making it known, existed. The diffusion of a knowledge, both of the fact and of its consequences, cannot fail to produce a remedy; and for this purpose, as I have elsewhere suggested, the reading of the Abstracts, at meetings of the inhabitants of the districts convened at the schoolhouse, or other convenient place; the circulation of their contents by means of lectures and newspapers; the visitation of negligent parents, by the teachers and by the committees, together with conversations, held on all proper occasions, by those who know more of the subject, with those who know less, will be rapid and effectual means of conveying the information to the very individuals who need it, and must lead, in the end, to a much-needed reform. It is surprising and cheering to know what can be done by the combined and harmonious exertions of all, to accomplish this object. There were many families of children, last winter, who did not miss a single day in their attendance; and in one school, although the roads were almost impassable from snow, there was scarcely the absence of a scholar, during the whole school term.

If the school is to continue four months, and parents or guardians cannot send their children more than two or three, let them be sent continuously, while they are sent at all, and taken wholly from school, the residue of the time. Six weeks of constant attendance is better than three months scattered promiscuously over a four months' school. So if nine o'clock comes too early in the morning for punctual attendance, let the school begin at ten, or even at half past ten. Almost any thing is better for children than to form the pernicious habit of

tardiness, which in regard to the rights of others, has all the practical effect of dishonesty, and varies but a shade from it, in the motive.

Notwithstanding the melancholy view of the subject, presented by existing facts, yet when we consider the excessive severity of the last winter, the depth of snow which, for a long period, overspread all the inland counties, rendering the roads nearly impassable for weeks together ; and also the fact, that in many places, children suffered to an extraordinary degree, from epidemic sickness, the average attendance was better than in former years. It was not until last year, that any return was ever made of the children, under four and over sixteen years of age, attending the schools. The number was found to be about twenty thousand. Heretofore, in comparing the average number of children in school, with the whole number of children in the State, between four and sixteen years of age, for the purpose of ascertaining what proportion of the whole number were in school, those who were below the age of four, and above that of sixteen, have been reckoned as between four and sixteen, and thus have materially swelled the apparent proportion of attendants.

SUPERINTENDING, OR TOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEES.

By the combined influence of the new interest which has been excited on the subject of education, throughout the State, and of the act of April 13, 1838, which relieved the office of school-committee man from being a pecuniary burden, as well as a tax on time and labor ; the schools, during the last winter, received more than double,—probably three times,—the visitations from the committees, they had ever enjoyed before. The benefits of these visitations can hardly be overestimated ; but I have spoken of this elsewhere.

In regard to the examination of teachers, a moment's reflection will show, that the intervention of a school committee is essential, in order to maintain a proper standard of teachers' qualifications. With a more dense population than any other State in the Union ; with all such departments of business as are deemed most eligible, full to overflowing ; and with so many young people amongst us, seeking to gain a subsistence without manual labor ; the station of a teacher has become a desirable one, to a largely increased number of persons. Co-existing with these facts, are the private biases or temptations, which beset the prudential committee, whose duty it ordinarily is to select

the teachers. Few prudential committee men, can be found, who have not relatives in the first, second or third degree, or partners in business, or personal and near friends, some one or more of whom, in the dearth of other employments, will apply to him for the school ; or who, perhaps, have secured his election that they might apply. Under such circumstances, though we allow to the prudential committees a full share of integrity and public spirit, it is hardly possible, that, acting from motives common to all mankind, they should not, sometimes if not frequently, favor proposals for the school from applicants who are incompetent, either in literary qualifications or in moral character. In such cases, without a superintending committee of firmness and integrity, who will protect the children of the district from the impending calamity of a bad teacher ?

Again, it is an acknowledged fact, that a great proportion of the teachers in our schools follow the occupation for a short period only. Probably a majority of them do not keep school more than two or three, or at most three or four seasons. Their places are then supplied by others, who are not only inexperienced, but who add to their inexperience, the imperfections inseparable from youth and immaturity of mind. To these teachers, the sympathy, and kindness, and advice of a judicious committee are of incalculable service. In regard to the teacher himself, they stand in the relation of friends and counsellors ; in regard to the district, they are his mediators and advocates ; and in regard to the school itself, their presence, their persuasion or rebuke, and even the expectation of their presence, persuasion or rebuke, exerts an influence powerfully impulsive to diligence, and repressive of disorder.

The town committee, also, are set as guards to prevent the ingress of one of the most insidious and formidable evils to which our schools are exposed ;—an evil which has been a canker, fatal to the usefulness of many of the public ones, and still more so to the private. No teacher can be so entirely dead to the reputation he is to leave behind him, as not to desire the favorable appearance of his school, at its close. But where the scholars have been put upon the acquisition of no *real* knowledge, during the first part of the term, it is still practicable for them to master a little *verbal* knowledge, during the last. And, hence, it sometimes happens that previous to the close of the school, in order to atone for the neglect of all the

other powers of the mind, the faculty for remembering words is put on double duty. A few lessons are selected for the respective classes, on which they are daily drilled, with a tacit and mutual understanding on the part of teacher and classes, that, on the day of examination, these are to be displayed as specimens of the pupils' general attainments. Viewed as an intellectual exercise, the utter hollowness and mockery of such a proceeding, entitle it to the severest condemnation ; but regarded in a moral light, it is premeditated and egregious fraud. Under pretence of a sample, whose very name imports that it is similar to, and a part of, the main body or bulk ; it palms off the most valueless of all things,—an empty form of words,—for one of the most valuable of all,—substantial knowledge. The most iniquitous part of this proceeding, however, consists in its enticing the children themselves, to become voluntary participators in the deception. It would be far less deplorable, were the fraud practised *for* them, instead of *by* them. But though their consciences would revolt at it, if it were presented in its true character and odiousness, yet, as it is presented in so disguised and alluring a shape, they are readily seduced to become partners in the conspiracy. The offence has the double aggravation, that, in regard to knowledge, it gives words for things ; while, in regard to dishonesty, it teaches the thing itself.

Against the continuance of this useless and immoral practice, wherever it exists ; against its introduction, wherever it threatens ; the school committee are our legally constituted defenders and protectors. At their first visitation of the school, they can explain to both teacher and scholars, that all knowledge is for use, and not for show ; that books are to be regarded as means only, and not as ends ; that the mind is to gain ability or power by the exercise of its faculties, as well as a knowledge of facts by the aid of memory ; that the value of the school consists in its preparation of the scholars to enter upon the sober business, the momentous scenes, the solemn duties of life, but in no degree upon its enabling them to make a supposed brilliant display for five or ten minutes, at the end of the term. By a clear and strong exposition of these ideas, at the first visitation of the school, and by giving notice that they shall take the final examination, substantially, into their own hands, both teacher and scholars

will be apprized of the grand destination, which they are to keep perpetually in view, and of the course of study, by which alone it can be reached. At the monthly and other intermediate visitations, let the advice given, and the questions proposed, be directed to the same points ; and, at the closing examination, let little reference be made to the school books, but let the whole investigation take a practical character. To test the knowledge of the upper classes, one member of the committee can produce a promissory note, having numerous endorsements, and give it to a class in arithmetic, that the interest may be cast ; another may give the minutes of a deed of land, where the premises are set out by courses and distances, and direct another class to plot it, and calculate its quantity in acres ; or he may demand the superficial measurement of the floor of the school room, or the cubic contents of a given pile of wood, or quarry of marble or granite ; another class may be called on to explain how it happens, that, while the equatorial diameter of the earth is twenty-six miles longer than its polar diameter, yet the river Mississippi, which rises not far from 50° N. latitude, runs south into the Gulf of Mexico, and the river Amazon, one branch of which rises near 20° S. latitude, runs northwardly, and falls into the Atlantic, so that the mouths of both these rivers are much farther from the centre of the earth in a direct line, than either of the poles are ;—or to explain why the inhabitants who live within the tropics, have two winters and two summers, each year, while those who live in the temperate and frigid zones have but one, and so forth and so forth ;—of course varying the subject-matter, and the difficulty of the questions, according to the general standing of each class. If such a course of direction and of examination, could be pursued for a few years, the character of many of our schools would be vastly improved, and the deception of show-examinations be forever abolished. If I were the commander of an army, and should expect to fight a pitched battle, to-morrow, I might feel justified in appealing to the strongest motive-forces in each officer and soldier under my command ;—in showing to the ambitious that there would be an opportunity for the display of bravery, and to the timid, that their greatest safety was in the vigor of the onset ;—in calling up visions of honor, of country and of home for the patriotic, and inspiring the conscientious with

stronger feelings of duty,—and thus, running around the whole circle of the predominating motives, make all conspire to the production of my immediate aim. But in a school, where the object is to prepare, not for to-morrow, but for life,—not for a single exploit, but for character, the very opposite of this course is often necessary. If any faculty or impulse of a pupil is so strong that it threatens to grow into a deformity ;—if any faculty or impulse is so weak that the future character will be unbalanced, unless the deficient power be cultivated into a symmetrical proportion with others, then the strong should be repressed, and the weak should be fostered,—during the whole school, if need be,—however much the season of recitation, or the day of exhibition may suffer. That education is false, which sacrifices the well-being of the future to the eclat of a passing hour.

The school committee is the only body, who can make such a report to the town respecting the condition and wants of the schools, as may be made the basis of a wise and liberal course of municipal action in their behalf. No other board of town officers can have such an acquaintance with facts,—at once comprehensive and minute,—as will furnish materials, upon which the fathers of the rising generation can act, in reference to the well-being of their children. The prudential committee cannot do it ; for however intelligent and faithful they may be, in their respective spheres of duty ; yet, being confined each to his own district, they cannot have those comparative views respecting different schools, which are essential to sound, general conclusions.

On the whole, the services of the school committees seem second to those of no class of public functionaries. They are worthy to be sustained, rewarded, honored ; and though their faithful labors may not be appreciated by contemporaries, they cannot fail to receive the gratitude of posterity.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.

During the last year, an event, worthy of special notice, has occurred, in relation to the supervisory part of our school system. I refer to an appropriation by the town of Springfield of the sum of \$1000 as a salary for a superintendent of their schools, to be selected and

appointed by the town committee. In that town, as in a considerable number of others in the State, the schools are so numerous, and their terms so long, that if one person were to visit a school, each working day in the year, the number of days would be too few to complete the circuit of visitations, as required by law. Where the legal number of visitations is so great, and the duty of making them is devolved upon men engaged in professional, or in common avocations, it is impossible to avoid a competition between the private business of the committee man, and the public duty of visitation ; and, where this competition exists, there is always danger that the former will triumph in the rivalry. Nor can it be denied, that one, whose whole time and talents are devoted to the interests of the schools,—to an examination and selection of text books, to the introduction of improved processes in teaching, and of better modes of governing ;—in fine, to a more thorough acquaintance with the great subject of education, in its principles, and in its practical details, would be far better qualified for the discharge of his duties, than if those duties were only an occasional employment, and collateral to his main pursuits. Guided by these views, the committee of Springfield, in their last annual report, recommended the appointment of a superintendent of the schools. The town adopted the recommendation ; but owing to some unavoidable delays, the gentleman who was appointed did not enter upon the duties of his office, until a considerable portion of the current school year had elapsed. It is obvious, that the success of this measure will mainly depend upon the competency of the officer chosen to execute it. That success is most earnestly to be desired ; and, I may add, is reasonably to be anticipated. Should such be the happy result, it may be expected that the example will be followed by other towns, where the number of the schools is too large, and the engagements of the committee too engrossing, to permit a full compliance with the law, both as to the number and the quality of the visitations. The neighboring city of Providence, which, within the last two years, has established a system of public schools upon the most liberal foundation, has incorporated the office of superintendent into her general plan ; and, under the auspices of a gentleman,* in every respect admirably qualified for the station, her schools are making very rapid improvement.

* Nathan Bishop, Esq.

PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE.

Though the prudential and the superintending committee generally derive their authority from different sources, and are amenable for its exercise, to a different constituency ; yet some of the most important portions of their respective duties are so intimately blended, that a want of harmony between them is fatal to the welfare of the schools.

The prudential committee not only has great powers, but all his acts become still more important from the fact of their being antecedent or preliminary. It is his duty to provide both a house for the school, and fuel and furniture for the house ; and, in a climate like ours, whoever has the prerogative of determining in what kind of house a man shall live, and what fuel and furniture he shall have, has the power of determining, whether or not he shall live at all. As the general condition of the school, and of its permanent fixtures, goes far towards representing the character of the district, so the particular condition of the house and its appurtenances, and their state of repair, are an open and visible commentary on the character of the prudential-committee man. If he does not provide a good place, in which to keep the school, it is hardly possible for the united exertions of the district and of the town committee to ensure a good school.

So, too, with respect to the teacher of the school. In all governments, it is justly held that an immense accession of power is conferred upon the department, to which the initiative in legislation is given, i. e. the power of propounding all bills, drafts or projects of law. The prudential committee, with very few exceptions, has this initiative in regard to the teachers. As a general rule, he "selects and contracts," with them, subject, indeed, to have the contract vacated, by a refusal of the town committee to give a certificate of approval ; but a refusal of a certificate, even for good cause, is so unwelcome a duty, and the range of construction which may be put upon the word "qualified," is so vast, that there are a hundred chances that an incompetent candidate will be approved, for one that a competent person will be rejected.

It is of unspeakable importance, therefore, that there be no conflict of interests, of feelings, or of motives between the prudential, and the superintending committees. They are but different fingers

of the same hand, and they cannot wield this instrument with any efficiency, unless they seize it with a united grasp. If the prudential committee selects, and presents for approval, any candidate, of whose literary qualifications, personal habits and manners, or moral character, there is ground to doubt ;—in the first place, he commits an act of unkindness towards the candidate himself, who, thereby, is exposed to the mortification of being rejected ; and, in the next place, he subjects the superintending committee to the alternative either of inflicting this mortification, or of approving an incompetent person. But the position of the examining committee is that of judges of a most important question pending between the applicant, as one party, and the children of the district, as the other ; and they should never be tempted, by bribe or bias, to depart from rectitude in their decision. When solicitations for the school are made by suspicious applicants, the prudential committee can pass them by without inflicting any pain, or giving any publicity, and thus save all parties from great ultimate harm.

As a general fact, the importance of the office of prudential-committee man is greatly underrated.

MANIFESTATION OF PARENTAL INTEREST.

Sovereign, reigning over and above all other influences upon the school, is, or rather might be, that of the parents. The father, when presiding at his table, or returning home at evening, from the labors of the day,—the mother, in that intercourse with her children which begins with the waking hour of the morning, and lasts until the hour of sleep, enjoy a continuing opportunity, by arranging the affairs of the household in such a way as to accommodate the hours of the school ; by subordinating the little interests or conveniences of the family to the paramount subject of regular and punctual attendance ; by manifesting such an interest in the studies of each child, that he will feel a daily responsibility, as well as a daily encouragement in regard to his lessons ; by foregoing an hour of useless amusement, or a call of ceremony, in order to make a visit to the school ; by inviting the teacher to the house, and treating him, not as a hireling, but as a wiser friend ; by a conscientious care in regard to their conversation about the school, and their award of praise or blame ;—

in fine, by all those countless modes, which parental affection, when guided by reason, will make delightful to themselves,—the parents can inspire their offspring with a love of knowledge, a habit of industry, a sense of decorum, a respect for manliness of conduct and dignity of character, prophetic of their future usefulness, and happiness, and honor.

For one who has not traversed the State, and made himself actually acquainted with the condition of the schools, by personal inspection and inquiry, it is impossible fully to conceive the contrasts they now present. I have no hope, therefore, of making myself adequately understood, when I say, that in contiguous towns, and even in contiguous districts, activity and paralysis,—it is hardly too much to say, life and death,—are to be found, side by side. Wherever a town or a district has been blessed with a few men, or even with a single man, who had intellect to comprehend the bearings of this great subject, and a spirit to labor in the work, there a revolution in public sentiment has been effected, or is now going on. In some districts, last winter, the prosperity of the school became a leading topic of conversation among the neighbors ; the presence of visitors, from day to day, cheered the scholars ; a public spirit grew up among them, animating to exertion, and demanding courteous, honorable, just behavior ;—the consequence of which was, that, by a law as certain as that light comes with the rising of the sun, a proficiency surpassing all former example was made ; and when the schools drew to a close, a crowd of delighted spectators attended the final examination, which, from the interest and the pleasure of the scene, was prolonged into the night. In some places, the visitors who did not come early to this examination, could not obtain admittance on account of the crowded state of the house ; and, in one, although a cold and driving snow storm lasted through the day, yet a hundred parents attended, whom the inclemency of the weather could not deter from being present, to celebrate this harvest-home of knowledge and virtue ;—while, on the same occasion, in an adjoining town, perhaps in a bordering district, a solitary committee man dropped grudgingly in, to witness a half hour of mechanical movements, got up as a mock representation of knowledge, and to look at the half-emptied benches of the school room made vacant by deserters. These differences are not

imaginary ; they are real, and their proximate cause is, the interest or the want of interest, manifested by the parents towards the schools.

It is a celebrated saying of the French philosopher and educationist, Cousin, that "as is the teacher, so is the school." In regard to France and Prussia, where the schools depend so much upon the authority of the government, and so little upon the social influences of the neighborhood where they exist, this brief saying is the embodiment of an important truth ; but with our institutions, there is far less reason for giving it the currency and force of a proverb. Here, every thing emanates from the people ; they are the original ; all else is copy. If, therefore, the transatlantic maxim, which identifies the character of the school with that of the teacher, be introduced amongst us, it must be with the addition, that "as are the parents, so are both teacher and school."

A visit to the school by the parents produces a salutary effect upon themselves. Although it is feeling which originates and sends forth conduct, yet conduct reacts powerfully upon feeling ; and, therefore, if parents could be induced to commence the performance of this duty, they would soon find it not only delightful in itself, but demanded by the force of habit. Nor is it any excuse for their neglect, that they are incapable, in point of literary attainments, of examining the school, or of deciding upon the accuracy of recitations. If they have no knowledge to bestow in instruction, they all have sympathy to give in encouragement. Indeed, the children must be animated to exertion, before they will make any valuable or lasting attainment. This animation the parents can impart, and thus become the means of creating a good, they do not themselves possess.

It is surprising that the sagacity of parental love does not discover that a child, whose parents interest the teacher in his welfare, will be treated much better in school, than he otherwise would be ; and this too, without the teacher's incurring the guilt of partiality. If the teacher is made acquainted with the peculiarities of the child's disposition, he will be able to manage him more judiciously, and therefore more successfully, than he otherwise could ; he will be able to approach the child's mind through existing avenues, instead of roughly forcing a new passage to it ; and thus, in many instances, to supersede punishment by mild measures. A wise physician always desires to

know the constitution and habit of his patient, before he prescribes for his malady ; and a parent, who should call a medical practitioner to administer to a sick child, but should refuse to give him this information, would be accounted insane. But are the maladies of the mind less latent, and subtile, and elusive than those of the body ; and is a less degree of peril to be apprehended, in the former case than in the latter, from the prescriptions of ignorance ? I have been credibly informed of a case, where a child received a severe chastisement in school, for not reading distinctly, when the inarticulateness was occasioned by a natural impediment in his organs of speech. The parent sent the child to school without communicating this fact to the teacher, and, under the circumstances of the case, the teacher mistook the involuntary defect for natural obstinacy. This may seem an extreme case, and one not likely to happen, but doubtless, hundreds of similar, though less discoverable ones, in regard to some mental, or moral deficiency, are daily occurring. Again, if parents do not visit the school, until at, or near its close, they may then discover errors or evils, whose consequences, might have been foreseen on an earlier visit, and thus prevented. It is another fact, eminently worthy of parental consideration, that many young and timid children, unaccustomed to see persons not belonging to the family, are almost paralyzed when first brought into the presence of strangers. An excessive diffidence cripples their limbs and benumbs all their senses ; and it is only by their being gradually familiarized to company, that the fetters of embarrassment can be stripped off, and the shy, downcast countenance be uplifted. After a few years of neglect, this awkwardness and shame-facedness, become irremediable ; they harden the whole frame, as it were, into a petrification, and their victim always finds himself bereft of his faculties, at the very moment when he has most need of freedom and vigor, in their exercise. On the other hand, pert, forward, self-esteeming children,* who are unaccustomed to the equitable reciprocities of social intercourse, commit the opposite error of becoming rude, aggressive, and disdainful, whenever brought into contact with society. Now, one of the best remedies or preventives which children can enjoy, both for this disabling bashfulness, and for this spirit of effrontery, is the meeting of visitors in school, where, a previous knowledge of what the occasion demands, helps them to behave in a natural manner, notwithstanding the

consciousness that others are present ; and where they are relieved from the double embarrassment of thinking both what they are to do, and how it should be done. Especially is it necessary, that mothers should accompany sensitive and timid children, when they first go to school, to obviate a distrust of the teacher, or a fear of other children, which might otherwise infix in the mind a permanent repugnance to the place. Whatever confers upon the school a single attraction, or removes from it one feature of harshness, clears the avenue for a more ready transmission of knowledge into the pupils' minds.

THE BREAKING UP OF SCHOOLS.

The breaking up of schools is a most serious evil, and one of not very infrequent occurrence. It happens from two causes. One is the literary incapacity of the teacher to instruct. Where teachers are guilty of the illegal and dishonorable practice of smuggling themselves into a school, without having obtained a certificate of qualification ; or, where the committee have granted such certificate without due scrutiny into the attainments of the candidate, the school term rarely closes, without giving demonstration of the great truth, that, in the long run, it is always impolitic as well as wrong, to swerve from principle. The school is either broken up, through the manifest incompetency of the teacher ; or, what is still worse, it is prolonged through a diseased existence, every day of which originates and scatters among the pupils, the infection of bad mental habits. The only remedy for this branch of the evil is to be found in the previous preparation of teachers, and in the conscientious discharge of duty by the examining committee.

The other cause of the breaking up of schools, is the open and successful resistance made by the scholars to the authority of the teacher. It is not all the scholars, however, in any school, who are implicated in this offence. The reports of the committees, for the last two years, have not disclosed a single instance, where the girls belonging to the school have caused its violent termination, or even participated in fomenting an insurrectionary spirit. Nor, among the boys, is it the younger who are ungovernable. A spirit of disobedience in them can generally be quelled by superior physical force, where it is not subdued by the infinitely better methods of kindness,

persuasion and an enlightenment of the sense of duty. There is then, but one other class of scholars, on whom the accusation can fall, of instigating and executing a successful rebellion ; and, to any man who has any adequate conception of the value and excellence of propriety and decency in conduct, and of the universal necessity of order and law in the management of affairs, it must be a source of immeasurable regret, that this class should, without exception, consist of the *larger and older boys of the school*. It must be a source of immeasurable regret, that, at the very time when we begin to look to these young men for a self-regulating power, for decorous and gentlemanly behavior, for a thoughtful and dignified anticipation of the great duties of life, which lie so immediately before them ;—that, at this time, we should find them recklessly engaging in a course, which involves in its catalogue of wrongs, not only the squandering away of the last few running sands of their school-going life, and the exhibition of a most baneful example before the junior members of the school ; but also the crime of ingratitude towards parents, friends, and townsmen, who, at great expense, have placed within their reach the inestimable privileges of education.

Yet such is the melancholy and almost incredible truth. The following are specimens of the expressions, used by committees, in reporting the schools which were broken up by a rebellion of the scholars, during the last winter : “two or three large and mischievous scholars ;”—“the rudeness and ill conduct of some of the larger boys ;”—“some of the larger scholars combined to interrupt the school ;”—“disturbance was made by one or two young men ;”—“turbulent boys defied the authority of the teacher ;”—“the larger scholars have done immense mischief ;”—“the pernicious example of the larger scholars ;”—“the larger and more turbulent scholars ;”—“levity of conduct on the part of a few of the large scholars ;”—“a spirit of insubordination manifested by some of the large scholars ;”—“two or three lawless young men ;”—“disorder occasioned by the refractoriness of the oldest boys ;”—“school broken up by the disorderly and insolent conduct of the scholars.” These are specimens of the phrases in which the sad story of an expelled or rejected teacher and a disbanded school, is told.

In surveying the whole social condition of the State, it would rarely

happen, that a more alarming and unnatural spectacle would be beheld, than that of a school, exploding before half its term had expired,—of a teacher going forth from the door of the schoolhouse, for the last time, in mortification and dishonor, instead of respect and affection ; and followed by insurgent and tumultuous scholars, proclaiming their own infamy, by shouts of triumph and language of insult. Or, if the event does not assume this conspicuous and riotous character, the passions which it displays, and the consequences to which it leads, are equally to be condemned and lamented. These “ young men,” (if without years of penitence, they will ever be worthy of the name of men,) have probably been, in most instances, from fifteen or sixteen to eighteen or twenty years old. Of course, they must all have passed the age when the law confers upon them certain rights, and demands of them the performance of certain duties, because it supposes that they have attained a certain amount of knowledge and discretion. They must have arrived at an age, when they can see for themselves the advantages of a supreme law for the government of all, because, without such law, there are others, both older and stronger than themselves, under whom they may be trodden down. Yet at this period, when their opportunities for an education are hastening rapidly to a close, instead of improving them with a zeal that should compensate for their brevity, they terminate them, at once, by violence and in disgrace. At the time when the law begins to clothe them with rights and duties, they begin to manifest their unfitness for the trust, by contemning the privileges it bestows. As they are about to become members of a republic, whose boast it is that men are capable of self-government, they are taking practical lessons in resistance to rightful authority ; as though it were possible, that those should ever be fit to govern others, who, themselves, have never learned to obey.

In regard to the various evils and deficiencies, which I have specified in the progress of this Report, I have endeavored to suggest, in each case, some antidote or remedy for their prevention or removal. But in regard to the guilty agents in these acts of insubordination and violence, I am at a loss what measures to recommend, which shall, at once, arrest their course, and inspire them with a due sentiment of abhorrence for their misconduct. What idea can these young men

have formed of common justice and equity, when for the purpose of indulging their own passions or prejudices against a teacher, they are willing to rob all the children in a whole neighborhood, as well as themselves, of the benefits of the school? Have they so little regard for the reputation and feelings of parents and relatives, as to feel no repugnance at involving them in the common odium of this flagrant misconduct? Can they look forward with satisfaction to a life, during which this will be the only alternative left to them, that, if they ever become respectable citizens, they will bitterly repent their course;—or, what is worse, they will escape the pain of repentance only by never becoming respectable. The institution of the Common Schools, for almost two hundred years, has been honored and eulogized by the greatest and the best men, who, within all that period, have enlightened and blessed this Commonwealth. Do these young men, who break up the schools by sedition and revolt, deem themselves so much wiser and better than all the wise and good men, who have lived before them, that they are authorized to destroy the usefulness, and to bring disparagement upon the name, of an institution which has been so long respected and honored? Perhaps they have heard some individual boasting, that when a pupil, he had rebelled against his teacher, encountered him with force, and driven him from the school; but, if they will take a second thought, they will invariably find that such boaster was a low, base, despised man, without respectability and without shame; and is it their ambition to resemble such a model? If they will look about them, and inquire into the personal history of individuals, they will find, that, in nineteen cases out of every twenty, those who are now the substantial, worthy, influential, beloved and honored members of society, were, when at school, the most orderly, diligent, and well-mannered scholars. They will find that it is the slothful, disobedient, mischievous, truant scholar who threatens to become, in after-life, the thriftless and squalid pauper, or a candidate for the house of correction or jail;—if he goes to college, to get expelled, if he obtains an office, to disgrace it, and finally to be an outcast in society; and are these the patterns which the young men, who rise up in defiance of the authority of their teachers, wish to imitate? To the teachers, whose

misfortune it is to come into collision with these young men, I can only say further :—Let them be warned, admonished, entreated, plied with every consideration that can sway a perverse, or kindle a generous disposition, to check the sallies of an ignorant and foolish temper, and to subject their impulses to the control of those laws of reason and duty, without which, all society and government, as well as the school, must be broken up. During the few days, while yet the precious boon of the school remains, let them redeem their time, by an earnest application to the studies, and an assiduous cultivation of the “good behavior,” which in after-life, will give them the intelligence proper for a citizen, and the character belonging to a gentleman, and will secure for them the universal respect of society.

I am aware of having dwelt long upon this topic ; but when we consider the enormity of the evil, any thing, tending to its repression, may be pardoned.

If it is difficult to express the depth of our grief, in regard to the conduct of the scholar who casts away his birth-right of education, by rising against his teacher and breaking up the school, what shall be said of the amazing infatuation of a parent who so violates the sanctity of the parental relation as, directly or indirectly, to encourage in his children the spirit of revolt ; or who, for any cause, allows his passions to obtain such mastery over the convictions of his reason and his sense of propriety, that he invades the school room to vilify or assault the teacher in the presence of the scholars. Happily, such cases are now very rare, and it is to be hoped that the public mind will soon be so enlightened and renovated, in regard to the value of our schools, as to render their recurrence impossible.

Although no word ought to be said in palliation of the deliberate and premeditated misconduct of scholars towards their teacher, yet there are numberless acts, rising in the scale from slight indiscretions even to grave misdemeanors, which argue an impulsive and vehement, rather than a perverse or incorrigible disposition ; and which are often committed by high-minded and honorable, though mistaken boys. Children play a thousand foolish, perhaps roguish, pranks, from a false, but current opinion, that they are becoming, that they are reputable, and proofs of what is called spirit. Children, too, are often applauded for acts of misbehavior, if accompanied by indications of wit or genius. The wrong is forgotten, or supposed to be atoned for,

by the skill manifested in committing it ; and hence their emulous minds seek for further applause, to be won by some other sally or contrivance of mischievous wit ; as though the mischief could be redeemed by the wit displayed in its execution. Now all this pride of success, this ambition of winning the approval of others, which, under a false guidance, leads, at first, to slight departures from decorum, ingenuousness, or rectitude, and, afterwards, to great delinquencies ;—all this pride and ambition might be converted, by one who understands the springs of human action, into a powerful auxiliary in the cause of good conduct. If the mind has an innate propensity whose sole function it is to delight in the good will, and to dread the displeasure of others, and which, of course, is indifferent to moral qualities ; then those who have the power of bestowing praise or blame, turn the whole force of this propensity towards right or towards wrong, by the actions which they select for approval or condemnation. This explains the influence of public opinion upon children,—an opinion which they do not create, but into which they are born,—just as they are born into the atmosphere,—and for the justness of which, therefore, they are, at first, no more responsible, than for the healthful or noxious qualities of the air given them to breathe. There is such a public opinion in every school. It is handed down from the older to the younger classes, and from one school term to another. Skillful, devoted, conscientious teachers always do much to reform and elevate it, and thus improve the school, not only during their own term, but for subsequent years. Bad teachers debase it, and throw heavy burdens upon their successors. But this train of thought leads insensibly back to the importance of employing such teachers,—and none but such teachers, as not only know, theoretically, the qualities which are desirable in the character of a scholar and a man, but, practically, how those qualities may be cultivated.

ABSENCE FROM FINAL EXAMINATION.

There is another species of misconduct, occasionally committed by the older half of the scholars, which is dishonorable in its motive and pernicious in its example. It is what is often denominated in the reports, “dodging the examination.” A portion of the scholars, on the day when the committee are expected to examine the school, absent themselves, leaving behind them neither papers nor writing book ;

nor, indeed, any vestige, by which the state of their knowledge, or their proficiency during the school, can be ascertained. This proceeding is, on the very face of it, self-condemnatory. Such scholars need no accusers ; they have volunteered a confession, upon which they must be convicted. The legal maxim, that flight is evidence of guilt, is here emphatically true. The vacant seat they have left behind, proves the vacant mind they have taken away. This mode, however, of escaping censure, is a delusive as well as a short-lived expedient. Though they may have indulged in idleness, during the school term, in anticipation of avoiding an exposure of their ignorance by deserting the school, at the closing examination ; yet, whither will they fly to hide their shame, when, coming upon the stage of life, their ignorance will be made manifest to the world, in all places where they appear, and in every word they utter.

RETROSPECT. NUMBER AND COMBINATION OF INFLUENCES, NECESSARY TO A GOOD SCHOOL.

In discussing the various topics imbodyed in this Report, and in pointing out, under each successive head, the imperfections belonging to it,—imperfections which prevent our school system from conferring those abundant and precious benefits, it is capable of bestowing, I have not been without fear, that my remarks might seem to wear an aspect of accusation, and to savor of harshness ; and although it might be admitted that no just exception could be taken to the views presented on any particular topic, still, that the tenor of the whole might seem too condemnatory and reprehensive. To be the bearer of unwelcome tidings, is proverbially a thankless office ; and the fidelity that tells a friend of his faults is too apt to forfeit the friendship which it should have strengthened. Yet, to these general rules, there are noble exceptions. A wise man wishes to know what is wrong in his affairs, that he may rectify it ; and every sincere lover of excellence rejoices to be made acquainted with his faults, that he may correct them. In commenting, therefore, upon what I consider the imperfections of our system, in good faith, and with a single eye to their removal, I have proceeded upon the conviction, that our people do possess that wisdom, and that love of excellence, which desires to “ forget the things which are behind,” and, in the career

of well-doing, to "press forward to those which are before ;" and rather to devote their energies to still higher achievements, than ignobly to waste them in vain-glorying and self-eulogy. It would have been easy for me,—and could duty have allowed, it would have been delightful,—to have occupied much more time, and to have filled a much larger space, in recounting those merits and excellences of our system of free schools, which, abroad as well as at home, it is acknowledged to possess ;—in pointing to the bright train of blessings which, from age to age, it has been the means of conferring upon the people of this State,—which it is now conferring, and, as it remains steadfast, while the generations rise and pass away, it promises still to confer, upon unborn millions. But, at best, the pleasure of self-adulation is fleeting, and it leaves no abiding improvement behind.

It should be remembered, too, that, in the administration of our system, a larger share of power is possessed by the people, than in any other state or country in the world. If it were true, here, that, as soon as any error or deficiency became known to the Legislature, —or to any central and supervisory body,—they could forthwith issue an edict for its correction, such a summary mode of proceeding would supersede the necessity of all explanation. But, where all measures of improvement and reform are to be carried out by the people, at large, it becomes necessary that they should first be made acquainted with the evils, which it is their interest and duty to remedy ; and, for this purpose, I have endeavored, faithfully, to perform the unwelcome task of describing them.

The explanation, and, to some extent, the excuses for the deficiencies here enumerated, are to be found in the number and complexity of the parts, whose combined and harmonious action is essential to a good school. We have no other institution, where such a confluence of favorable influences is necessary to the production of the desired result ; nor have we any, whose usefulness is so liable to be impaired, or even destroyed, by a single adverse tendency. A long train of measures is requisite to accomplish the end, and a failure in any one of the series, is ruin. If the school-house be bad, in regard to its location or internal construction, then,

not only will the improvement in the children's minds be materially lessened, but the healthiness of their bodies will be exposed to continual danger. If the house be otherwise well built, but deficient in the single requisite of ventilation, two thirds of all the intellectual power of the children will be destroyed, at the very moment when they are called upon to exercise it. In the whole range of science, no fact is better established, than that the breathing of impure air benumbs and stupifies every faculty ; and, therefore, to call upon children to study, or understand, or remember, while we give them impure air for breathing, is as absurd as to put fetters upon their limbs, when we wish them to run swiftly ; or to interpose an opaque body between their eyes and any object, which we wish them to see clearly. But if the schoolhouse be the best that art can build, yet, if the town grants only penurious supplies of money, the school will but just begin, when the means of supporting it will end. This is the false economy of saving, in the seed, though thirty, or sixty, or a hundred fold be lost in the harvest. Even when the town makes liberal grants of money, in proportion to its valuation and census, still, if it has unwisely divided its territory into minute districts, it defeats its own liberality ; for, by attempting to support so many schools, with disproportionate means, it gives an efficient support to none. But with a good schoolhouse, and with such large and populous districts, or union districts, as give the multiplying power of union and concert to individual action ; still, the employment of a bad teacher will vitiate the whole ; and the place will have been prepared, and the money appropriated, only to gather the children into a receptacle, where bad feelings and passions, bad language and manners will ferment into corruption ;—and, without a good prudential and superintending committee, the chance of securing the services of a good teacher becomes so small as to elude even a fractional expression. And again ; if the most perfect teacher is obtained, still the scholars must be brought within the circle of his influence in order to be benefited ; and, therefore, absence, irregularity and tardiness must be prevented, or the good teacher will have been employed in vain. Let all other influences be propitious, and the single circumstance of which so little has heretofore been thought, viz., a diversity of class books

for scholars of similar ages and attainments will derange every operation of the school ; because no perseverance, no fertility of resources on the part of the teacher, can carry it forward, if each pupil brings a different book. The obstacle defies human genius. All that reciprocal aid and stimulus is lost, which the different minds of a class afford each other, when they have once been awakened, and their attention turned upon the same point. To expect progress, under this embarrassment, is as unreasonable as it would be for a singing-master to expect concord of sounds, when all his pupils were singing simultaneously from different notes. Even if all the preceding arrangements and appointments are perfect, it will yet be true, that not one half of the capabilities of the school will be developed, unless the parents breathe life into the children before they leave their own door, and send them to school hungering and thirsting after knowledge.

Now all these various agencies must work in concert, or they work in vain. When a system is so numerous in its parts, and so complex in its structure ; when the nice adjustment of each, and the harmonious working of all, are necessary to the perfection of the product ; all who are engaged in its operation, must not only have a great extent of knowledge, but they must be bound together by a unity of purpose. Experience has often proved how fatally powerful one ill-disposed person can be, in destroying the value of a school ; but experience is yet to prove, what an amount of corporeal and material well-being, of social enjoyment, of intellectual dominion and majesty, of moral purity and fervor,—what an amount, in fine, of both temporal and spiritual blessedness, this institution, in the Providence of God, may be the means of conferring upon the race.

Experience is yet to develop the grandeur and the glory which, through the exhaustless capabilities of this institution, may be wrought out for mankind, when, by the united labors of the wise and the good, its elastic nature shall be so expanded as to become capacious of the millions of immortal beings, who, from the recesses of Infinite Power, are evoked into this life, as a place of preparation for a higher state of existence,—and whom, like a nursing mother, it shall receive and cherish, and shall instruct and train, in the knowledge, and the observ-

ance, and the love, of those divine laws and commandments, upon which the Creator, both of the body and the soul, has made their highest happiness to depend.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

BOSTON, JANUARY 13, 1841.

NOTE to pp. 45—6.

Since the paragraphs, on pp. 45—6, respecting "Female Teachers," were written, I have received, from England, a pamphlet, "ON DUTCH AND GERMAN SCHOOLS, by W. E. HICKSON," from which, as corroborative of the views contained in the text, I select the following :

"It is to be remarked, that in Germany there are no Normal schools for female teachers, beyond one or two, confined chiefly to the object of fitting them to give instruction in sewing and knitting; and there is this peculiarity in Dutch and German schools, that women are rarely employed in them excepting in that capacity, or as mistresses of infant schools. In large rooms, filled entirely with girls, we rarely found a schoolmistress, or a female teacher, unless the children belonged to the lowest class in the school, and were merely learning the alphabet, or unless the hour for needle-work had arrived. The Germans greatly underrate the physical strength, and intellectual power of women, as adapted for the work of instruction. They affect a great contempt for female authorship, arising partly, perhaps, from the fact that they have but few writers of that sex, or but few to be compared with the best of those of England and France. We believe this prejudice against female talent to be unfortunate and mischievous. There is nothing that a girl can learn, that a woman is incapable of teaching, when properly trained; and in many cases,—as every one knows who has frequented Sunday schools,—women make better instructors than those of the other sex. Women have often more talent for conversational teaching, (the best of all forms of instruction,) more quickness of perception in seizing difficulties by which the mind of a child is embarrassed, and more mildness of manner than a master commonly possesses; and when these important qualities are combined with the proper degree of firmness, (and that, too, may be acquired,) they cannot be excelled. For teaching singing they are especially qualified, as the pitch of their voices enables them to sing in unison with children, instead of an octave below; and for the physical strength said to be wanting, no instruction can be fit for a child that is given in a form that would exhaust any frame but one of iron or brass. But we need not dwell upon this part of our subject, for English notions of delicacy would not permit schools to exist in which girls of thirteen and fourteen should be left, for hours together, without any person to consult belonging to their own sex. Normal schools, therefore, if ever established in this country, must be formed for women as well as for men."

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

99

Jan. 15,	Gov. Everett's order to C. Pierce for repairs on Normal School building,	178 04	
July 25,	Gov. Morton's order to N. Tillinghast, for 19 weeks services as assistant,	250 00	
May 30,	Gov. Morton's order to C. Pierce,	491 83	
July 1,	B. Mussey's bill, 1 year's rent and taxes to date,	107 42	2921 91
Mar. 4,	To sundry bills for Barre Normal School : S. P. Newman's bill for 1 quarter's tuition to March 1, 1840,	350 00	
June 1,	Do. do. for 1 qr. to June 1,	350 00	
Sept. 1,	Do. do. to Sept. 1,	350 00	
Dec. 1,	Do. do. to Dec. 1,	350 00	
April 16,	Gov. Morton's order to S. P. Newman, for services of assistant 11 weeks, 137 50 do. do. writing master, 25 00	162 50	
Dec. 1,	Gov. Morton's order for do. writing master, 25 00	188 50	1841
Nov. 2,	To Gov. Morton's order to N. Tillinghast,	1751 00	Jan. 1,
Dec. 31,	To balance to new account,	100 00	
		1590 94	
		<u>\$6473 13</u>	
	By balance from old account,		<u>\$1590 94</u>

Errors Excepted.

Boston, Jan. 12, 1841. *

CHAS. H. MILLS, Treasurer.

1841, Jan. 21.—The Committee of Finance, to whom this account was referred, have examined the same, with the vouchers for the several items, and find the whole correctly cast and properly vouched.
For the Committee, R. RANTOUL, Jr., Chairman.

APPENDIX.

Referred to, page 27.

Letter from DR. SAMUEL B. WOODWARD.

STATE LUNATIC HOSPITAL, WORCESTER, DEC. 7th, 1840.

HON. HORACE MANN,

DEAR SIR,—I received your note of the 28th of November, but owing to the uncommon pressure of business and the preparation of my Annual Report, I have delayed answering it.

The subject of your inquiry is one of deep interest, and I fear not generally understood by parents or teachers.

Children under eight years of age should not usually be confined to the school room more than one hour at a time, nor more than four hours in a day.

These hours should afford considerable diversity of employments, so as to enable the child to change his posture frequently, and to be more or less upon his feet; and, also, to change the subject of thought, so that the mind shall not be occupied by one subject too long or too intensely.

Intensity should be carefully avoided; it leads directly to disease of the brain, and often probably *arises* from this cause. Precocity is generally the result of a morbid condition of this organ, either *functional* or *organic*; the *former* may generally be cured by timely attention, the *latter* exhibits itself in epilepsy, insanity, or an imbecility of mind, or proves fatal, by the occurrence of inflammation or convulsions.

If a child exhibits any symptoms of precocity, it should be taken immediately from books and be permitted to ramble and play in the open air, or engage in manual labor and such amusements as will give rest to the mind, and health and vigor to the body.

The recess at school, for children of eight years and under, should be long, the play active and even noisy, (for the lungs acquire strength by exercise as well as the muscles;) every child should be required to unite in the sports of play time.

Fifteen minutes is short time for recess; half an hour is better, particularly in summer.

During recess, the school room should be thrown open in warm weather, and the windows be dropped a little way in cold weather, so as thoroughly to ventilate the apartments. We have hardly learned yet that pure air is equally as important to health and life as good nourishment and pure water.

In school regulations, regard is usually had to mental and moral improvement only. We forget that we have bodies, the preservation and training of which are not less necessary to the young, than the acquisition of knowledge. Without health, we can have little enjoyment. With it we can learn all that is necessary, with ease,—if we are not in too great haste. No limit is given to the age in which the vigorous and healthy may acquire useful knowledge.

It is of little use to make great acquirements, if in doing so, we sow the seeds of disease that will destroy the happiness and usefulness of life.

In haste, yours very truly,

S. B. WOODWARD.

Letter from DR. JAMES JACKSON.

DEAR SIR,—In reply to your note of the 26th, I beg to say, that it will give me much pleasure to aid in the great work in which you are engaged, in any, the humblest manner. You have a right to demand assistance from any man in the Commonwealth, and to call out the posse, if need be.

“What is a suitable length of time to confine children under six or eight years of age in school, during the day; and what is the suitable length for one session, without a recess.”

This is your question. I reply that I think four hours, in the short days, and five hours, in the long days, may safely be devoted to school, even at this early age, especially in those over five years. But you will see I have changed a word; I do not say, confined in school, but devoted to school. Perhaps in the country, where children go some distance from home, and do not go all the year, six hours are not too much even for young children, in days not shorter than ten hours; i. e. ten hours of sunshine.

But I do not think it wise to *confine* children, *in school*, so many hours in a day as I have mentioned. On the other hand, I regard it as essential that they should not remain in school more than one hour, at a time, on an average; that, during that hour, they should not be confined in one position, but, if possible, be engaged in short lessons, and short recitations, so as to have a diversity of employments; or in other ways have some variety; and that an hour's confinement should be followed by a recess of fifteen minutes. In very young children, (3 to 5,) the period of confinement should be shorter, and the recess longer. I take it to be easy to occupy young children usefully in school, without books and without perfect quiet, a part of the time, and that this is done at the present day to some extent. It is to this notion I refer, when I speak of other variety, than is afforded by book-study and recitation.

Will you ask me, now, whether these opinions are derived from the settled principles of physiology? I answer, in part, but not wholly. This science, (the science of man, if we mean human physiology,) gives no such defi-

nite rules. In general, it teaches that young children, much like young colts and calves and lambs, are disposed to short, active gambols, and then to lie down, or otherwise to take short rests; and that this exercise is most suitable to them. I never see a child marched, in a moderate, regular step, through a long walk, without regretting it. It is much easier to them to run ahead, and then stop a while. Young children cannot maintain a purpose a long time, nor an effort a long time, without fatigue. In their training or education, they should be alternated in these respects; for it is not the part of training to let every shoot grow wild; but it must be done gradually, for this reason, if no other, that we cannot proceed in any other way to attain our purposes. We may stop all growth, or we may produce deformity, but we cannot make a good growth in any other way.

In children, restraint in one position, except lying down, soon produces fatigue; not because they want to be at play, but because they are obliged to keep in constant action those muscles, by which the head and trunk are supported. This, at least, is one reason, an important one, and perhaps the principal one. I feel assured, that the lateral flexure of the spine in young girls, so much noticed, the last thirty or forty years, is to be attributed much more to the effort to sit upright too long, than to tight lacing, &c. You will not suspect me of being an advocate of this vile practice, but I cannot charge to it an evil, which has commonly occurred before that practice is begun. Unhappily, the evil is hereditary in a vast many families. But this by the by.

Children should not, then, be confined long to one position; when sitting or standing, they should not be required to maintain constantly an erect position of the body; for their muscles require more frequent alternations, (each one by itself,) than those of adults.—So much physiology teaches. But physiology does not point out just how many minutes a particular muscle may be kept contracted. In other words, there are not any general rules, precise in this respect, which are deduced from observation or experience. Nor can it well be otherwise. We differ so much in temperament, and each one differs so much at different times, according to the state of his health, and from various accidental causes, that such precise estimates cannot be made. An average might be obtained from long continued and accurate observations of large numbers of children; but this would require much labor and time, unless done in a loose way. This last, the loose way, is exactly what is done by those, who observe the experiments constantly going on in our houses and schools. It is from estimates made in this way, that you and I, and others, do make up our opinions. These are more to be relied on than any rules which can be derived from scientific physiology; though this may furnish an explanation of the mode in which evils are produced by too long confinement. I should therefore submit my opinion to that of an experienced teacher, who had been instructed in the general principles applicable to the subject, and who had observed carefully the

effects of confinement, for different lengths of time, to school exercises. Only, in such a case, I should require that teacher to tell me exactly how his pupils were employed, from one ten minutes to another.

I believe, that what I have said of too long continued exertion of any one muscle, or set of muscles, in sitting still, or in exercise,—in the case of young children,—will apply to too long continued devotion of the mind to any one object, or in any one mode. This must be injurious to young children, as in its proportion it is to older children and to adults; the difference, however, being very great between young children and those approaching adolescence. But I do not believe, that much harm is done in this way; for I much doubt whether young children can often be made to devote their minds intensely to study for a long time, uninterruptedly. "A boy may lead a horse to water," &c. A schoolmaster may keep a boy, under eight years of age, in his seat, and over his book, for two hours at a time; but he cannot, as I believe, often succeed in keeping his mind occupied in study for half an hour, or not more. As regards health, then, it is the confinement in school, and in one spot, for too long a time, which is mostly injurious.

Among various things, which press on my mind, relative to this matter, allow me to express my detestation of the practice of giving young children lessons to learn at home. In respect to those of any age, I speak of school boys or girls, under sixteen,—among these, the most which should be permitted, is a short lesson to be studied in the evening, when the days are long; such, perhaps, as a lesson in grammar, which must be committed to memory.

I am greatly in favor of sending children to school, at a very early age; when three years old, if in good health. But the benefits which I look for, and which seem to me very valuable, are not such as would be increased by studying lessons at home. I would have such young children gradually taught to sit still and study, but it should be for a very few minutes at a time, at first, and without restraining them, or attempting to restrain them, for any length of time, from whispering to each other. They will do this, and if forbidden, they only learn that they may disobey with impunity. But what are the benefits I look for, from this early schooling? They are the gradual accustoming of children to discipline, and to the confinement of school, so as to prepare them for their future course; but still more the bringing of them into the company of their peers. This last is of the greatest importance, as regards the physical, intellectual and moral education; and I think you may trace great evils, from the want of it, in all children brought up at home; and the earlier it is begun the better.

I must say a word about the recess. One would desire, that, during the recess, children should have a large and dry play-ground, sunny, and protected from the north and east, and having ample shade from trees. In cities, this cannot be afforded. Seldom can a good yard be allowed them. It is, however, essential to give them a turn in the open air, and not to

let this be in a cellar-like yard, on the north side of a house. Where there is nothing better, the children should go into the street, a few at a time, when the weather is good; and in bad weather, (when it rains or snows,) they should have a pleasant play-room; or, in default of this, be allowed to use the school room as such.

I might go on to speak of warming and ventilating school rooms, and then of various other matters connected with education. But I have already availed myself largely of the liberty you gave me to disregard the precise limits of your question. Nor, in truth, do I imagine that the general notions which I entertain on the subject, can be of any value to you, who have studied it much and carefully.

With great respect,

I am, dear Sir,

Your friend and obedient servant,

JAMES JACKSON.

BOSTON, DECEMBER 28, 1840.

To Hon. HORACE MANN.

Letter from DR. SAMUEL G. HOWE.

SOUTH BOSTON, DEC. 9, 1840.

HON. HORACE MANN.

MY DEAR SIR,—The questions which you have addressed to me are very important ones; and such as I fear very few persons engaged in teaching, ever propound to themselves.

How many hours daily, should children be confined in school; and how frequently should they have recesses?

The length of confinement, (how cruelly expressive of school time is this word) should, of course, depend upon the age and physical condition of the child; and the recesses should occur as often as his wearied mental powers require them.

It would be impossible to prescribe any precise number of hours which schools should be kept for children of different ages, and under all circumstances; because the child of nine years cannot bear so much as one of fourteen; and none of them can study so long in dog days, as in the spring.

A school, such as I suppose you would wish to see, should be entirely at the discretion of the master, with respect to the hours it is to be kept; and his rule should be never to confine his pupils to their duties longer than he can command their attention, and interest them in their lessons. He would

extend the time over as great a part of the day as possible, and have frequent and long recesses.

Were he limited to six hours instruction, I think he would effect more by holding three daily sessions, of two hours each, one in the morning, one at noon, and one towards night, with an intermission of fifteen minutes in the middle of each session, than he could, by having two sessions of three hours, and a recess in the middle of each

The principles of physiology would teach him that, even were it possible to keep up a long continued and intense mental activity, it would be only at a very great risk; he would consider that over-action of the brain fatigues it, just as much as over-action of the muscles of the arm fatigues them; with this fearful difference however, that over-action of the brain, in young persons, may lead to subsequent mental weakness, imbecility, and even idiocy. Moreover he would consider that its effect, though certain, is less obvious at first, and that functional disease of the organ may make considerable progress unobserved even by the sufferer.

But alas! how little attention is generally given to this subject; and into what strange contradictions are people led in governing children! How often do you see a master, or a parent, striving to keep immovable in his seat, for hours together, a robust boy, of sanguine temperament, to whom motion is as natural as to an eel, and whose body almost bounds from innate elasticity; and who is punished perhaps for some start or outbreak which he could not help, by being deprived of his recess, instead of being let out to blow off his extra steam by the rough and tumble exercises of the playground.

There was as much philosophy as fun, in the boy of this impatient temper of body, who after writhing with the torture of confinement and silence for two hours, suddenly shocked the decorum of the school by a loud and shrill whistle; and being sternly asked by the master why he did so, replied, "I didn't whistle, Sir, *it whistled itself!*"

Sometimes again, you may see a boy whose brain and nervous system are already too much developed,—who would leave play for study,—and whose puny frame already shows the effect of over activity of mind,—you shall see him, I say, excited to more intense application by praise, or by emulation, until his over-tasked powers give way, and the precocious prodigy sinks below the level of his companions, and perhaps remains for life a weak and inefficient man.

I do not say that great intellectual precocity is always indicative of morbid activity of the brain, but in the vast majority of cases it certainly is so; and I am rather inclined to pity than to congratulate parents whose children are prodigies of intellect. But, especially are they to be pitied if they do not understand physiology; and if they so far mistake the nature of the case as to add fuel to the flame which is already devouring the child. It is often the case, however, that persons who have some knowledge of physiology commit the very great error of judging the condition of the brain and nerves, as

they do that of other parts of the system : " when the muscular system," say they, " has performed work enough, a feeling of lassitude informs us of the fact, and we take rest ; and when the brain is weary, we in the same manner feel inclined to repose ; so that, as long as we feel lively, and *wide awake*, we may work the brain:" and they do work it, late into the night. But often, when the body has been excessively fatigued, and the nervous energy is exhausted, sleep follows not on rest, but we toss and turn in vain upon our pillows, courting slumber,—but " with all our wooings, can't win her to our couch " So it is with the brain when over-worked ; it becomes *morbidly excited*, it seems to crave action, and we, mistaking this for healthy action, go on and urge it to the utmost limit of its safe endurance, perhaps even beyond that. Now there is no question but this morbid action is often encouraged in children, and that it not unfrequently terminates in organic disease.

But I have wandered insensibly from my subject ; let me return to the number of hours which children should be kept in school. Since we cannot immediately realize our *beau ideal* of schools, we must consider them as they actually exist. My experience leads me to the conclusion that children under eight years of age should not be confined in one position, or have their minds fixed upon one branch of study, *more than half an hour at a time* ; that by following this rule, and giving them long recesses to be spent in the open air, they may study four entire hours daily. It also leads me to believe, that children over eight, and less than fourteen years, should not be confined in one position, or at one branch of study, more than three quarters of an hour at a time ; and that they should have the last quarter of each hour for exercise in the play-ground ; that is, they should leave their seats at fifteen minutes before ten or eleven, and be back to them again, by the time the clock strikes the hour. During recess, the doors and windows should be opened and the room freely ventilated. In this way children may be kept in school from eight in summer, and nine in winter, to noon ; and from three to six in the afternoon. I know that this will be sneered at by those school-masters who are attached to the *status in quo* : and that it may be asked how a school room with two hundred children could be kept in any kind of order if there should be a recess every hour ; I answer, that two hundred children have no business in one school room ; and I assert moreover, that those who so arrange the schools do so only from motives of economy, and that they are putting the physical, intellectual and spiritual interests of children in one scale, and vile dross in the other.

If it be said that one master cannot take care of children if kept in separate rooms, then I reply, have two—or three—or as many as the good of the children require, *cost what it may*.

If our school committees, or common councilmen, would fully realize the operation of being shut up in school, an hour and a half, and required to give close attention to study, let them (if they are twenty-four in number,) hold

their meetings, in a closet eight feet square, and as many in height, and be called to order for every hitch of their chairs, and for every yawn ; and see how long before an adjournment will be called for ; and yet such a closet would be as large in proportion to the number, (allowing for difference of size of the persons), as is allowed to children in schools not far from the metropolis.

I believe that the time for school, and the number and frequency of recesses which I have stated above, would be a better arrangement than is now generally adopted ; my own experience is in its favor, and so I believe are the inferences from physiological principles.

The length of time, however, which children may exercise their minds, not only with impunity, but with advantage, will depend greatly upon the tact of the teacher in the disposition of their tasks. Suppose a person wishes to apply three hours daily to the study of mathematics, three to moral philosophy, and three to music ; can there be a doubt which would be most advantageous, to study mathematics three successive hours, moral philosophy three, and then music three ; or to labor at his mathematics one hour, or one hour and a half, then to take a half an hour of music ; then go on with his mathematics, finish them, and recruit again with music, before applying his mind to moral philosophy ? It is just as certain that he would be relieved by the change, and effect more work, as that a man would carry a heavy bucket of water more easily by shifting it often from one hand to the other, than by carrying it all one day, in his right hand, and all the next day in his left.

I am aware that there are adults, who, by training, have brought their minds to such a state, that they can with impunity give their undivided energies, for hours and hours together, to one study ; but I have not yet marked their end,—nor, if I had, and should see their powers undiminished to the last, would it alter my views of what is fitting for children.

While on this subject, let me notice one very great fault in many of our private schools, which, in other respects, are very excellent, and regarded as models ; I mean the holding but one session daily, from nine until two o'clock. This practice, which I fear is continued in some cases for the convenience of the teachers alone, is in violation of the principles of physiology ; so obviously, indeed, that it needs no comment.

Similar to this fault, and originating from similar motives, is that of long vacations of six, or even eight, or ten weeks. These are destructive of habits of regular study, and mental discipline ; and are, in every respect, objectionable, except for the convenience of the teachers.

I do not believe, that vacations of more than two or three days are necessary in well regulated schools. I mean, they are not necessary for the physical or mental health of the pupils ; however convenient and even necessary they may be on other accounts. I believe that the Creator intended man should exercise his physical and his mental powers every day while he is in health ; I believe that he may, and ought so to exercise them ; that

he will need no vacation if he does not overwork his body or mind; nay, I believe that more harm than good will follow his letting his physical or mental powers lie idle, even two days in succession. The night is given to man for rest, and it should suffice him; when it does not, he may be sure he has violated some of the natural laws. He is not intended to hybernate like the bears, or to let any of his powers lie dormant for weeks and months together, but to use them every day of the few years which are allotted him on earth.

This doctrine will be pronounced by many to be in direct contradiction to their experience; and especially by the schoolmasters, or professional men, who feel so much refreshed by a vacation, and who return with so much boasted vigor to their pursuits. But, is not the very lassitude, which makes them desire a vacation, a proof that they have been over-taxing themselves, —working harder than Nature meant they should? And does not the very vigor which they feel on their return, indicate an accumulated power, which tempts them to renewed excesses? But I am again departing from my subject, which warns me that I have used my brain long enough for this time, and that I should close by expressing the deep interest which I feel in the noble cause, which you have at heart, and the sincere wishes which I entertain for your success, and your happiness.

Truly yours,

S. G. HOWE.

FIFTH

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Massachusetts.

BOARD OF EDUCATION,

TOGETHER WITH THE

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD.

Boston:
DUTTON AND WENTWORTH, STATE PRINTERS.
.....
1842.

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in General Court assembled.

The Board of Education, in compliance with the provisions of law prescribing their duties, submit the following

REPORT:

THE superintendence of the three Normal Schools, is, perhaps, one of the most important duties which devolve upon the Board. These schools were established for the purpose of making a fair trial of an important institution closely connected with our system of free schools. The chief object was to educate and prepare teachers for the business of school-keeping, and gradually to elevate the character and attainments of that class of persons;—the Legislature regarding it as the most effectual means of giving a higher importance to the Common Schools.

The Board has confided the management and superintendence of each of the Normal Schools to a visiting committee, and their progress and condition will be best understood by the reports of those visitors, which are submitted with this report. These schools were, by an arrangement with the citizens where they were respectively established, to continue for the term of

three years, which period, as it regards two of them, will expire in the course of the ensuing summer and autumn. It will therefore be a matter for legislative consideration whether they shall be further sustained.

The opinion of the Board on this subject is expressed in a report made by a committee at a recent meeting, a copy of which is annexed. By this report it will appear, that the Board consider it expedient to give the Normal Schools a further trial. Like all institutions of the kind, these schools have had their difficulties to contend with, though they seem to meet with most favor where they are best known. Their influence in the short space of three years, even if they should hereafter succeed so as to fulfil the highest hopes, cannot make a very strong or obvious impression, since the work of educating teachers must be slow, and then their influence upon the schools can only become gradually manifest. Three years would, therefore, seem to be an inadequate period to give the system such a trial as will fairly develop its true character, and display the influence it may exercise in increasing the efficiency and raising the reputation of the free schools of the Commonwealth.

The Board annex to this report the Fifth Annual Report of their Secretary, which will furnish evidence of his laborious attention and unwearied diligence in discharging the duties entrusted to him. This report is so full, and the subjects treated in it are so carefully and elaborately examined, that it relieves the Board from the necessity of noticing them. They prefer that the entire report of the Secretary should go to the Legislature, as the duties devolved upon him are far more important than those confided to the Board. The subject is one, also, to which he devotes his undivided attention, and while his means of information are comparatively great, it seems to be due to his station, and to the relation in which he stands, that his views and opinions should be presented to the Legislature as he makes them known to the Board. From these several documents it is believed that the Legislature will derive all the information which could be reasonably anticipated.

The subject of a School Library has been referred to in former reports. If, as it is stated in the report of the Secretary, there are more than one hundred towns in the State, (one third part of the whole number in it,) in which there is not a single town, social, or district school library, it would seem that a large portion of the children of the Commonwealth are growing up without adequate means for self-improvement. In view of this fact, the Board would respectfully suggest the expediency of furnishing some assistance to the districts, to aid and encourage them in procuring a school library. A sufficient sum for this purpose, might be taken from the State school fund, either at once, or in two or more successive years, without perceptibly impairing its present usefulness. On this subject the Board refer with pleasure to the recent proceedings of the State of New York. Although that State passed its first law for the establishment of Common Schools in 1812, yet it is now outstripping all the other States in the Union, in the comprehensiveness of its plans, and the munificence of its appropriations. A Common School library is now commenced in all the school districts of that State,—between ten and eleven thousand in number,—and the volumes distributed already amount to more than six hundred and thirty thousand. The same State has also provided for the appointment of one or more county superintendents of schools in each county, whose duty it is to examine all the schools, and report their condition to the State superintendent. To carry out more fully their extensive plans of improvement, the State has also authorized the superintendent to subscribe for a periodical devoted exclusively to the subject of Common School education, and to send a copy gratuitously to every district in the State.

In concluding their report, the Board feel much satisfaction in being able to say that the experience of the past year is highly encouraging, and has produced abundant evidence of an increased interest in promoting the education of the rising generation.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

JOHN DAVIS,
GEORGE HULL,
ROBERT' T RANTOUL, JR.,
THOMAS ROBBINS,
WM. G. BATES,
J. W. JAMES,
H. HUMPHREY,

Boston, *January* 1, 1842.

Note.—The Report of the Treasurer is also herewith transmitted.

REPORT
ON THE
LEXINGTON NORMAL SCHOOL.

The Board of Visitors of the Normal School at Lexington,

REPORT:

That the average number of pupils at this school for the last year, was for each term about twenty-five. For the current year it has been about thirty-five.

About thirty of the pupils of this school have left it, after passing through a course of instruction more or less complete. The success which has attended these young ladies, in the business of teaching, has been highly gratifying, not only generally, but almost universally.

The number of pupils at the close of the last year was forty ; and will be somewhat greater, in all probability, during the present year.

There have been, at this school, a great constancy and punctuality of attendance ; and the pupils have devoted themselves to the work of preparation for teaching with a zeal and indefatigable perseverance which merit hearty commendation, and are the surest guaranty of the fulfilment of the wishes of the friends of the institution.

At the examinations of the pupils, the evidence of their proficiency was more decided than had been anticipated by the most sanguine of those who have watched their progress with

interest ; and the undersigned cannot refrain from adding the expression of his entire conviction, from the history and results thus far of this school, that the specific education of teachers is by far the most powerful engine that can be put in operation for the elevation of the standard of education among us. This conviction was also impressed upon the minds of those present at the last annual examination, without, so far as I am informed, a single exception.

What has been said of the condition of the school is of itself a sufficient testimony to the ability, fidelity, and devotion of the teacher.

All which is respectfully submitted.

R. RANTOUL, Jr. *Chairman.*

REPORT

ON THE

BARRE NORMAL SCHOOL.

Having been designated, at the last meeting of the Board, to visit the Normal School in Barre, under the care of Professor Newman, and having been also requested to act as chairman of the committee appointed for that service, I notified Messrs. Briggs and Bates of the time of meeting, just as the school was closing, in the latter part of November. But I am sorry to say, that it was not convenient for either of those gentlemen to attend the examination.

I went to Barre, hoping to meet them, was very cordially received by Professor Newman, and spent a day in hearing the regular exercises and examinations of the classes. I found the school in a very flourishing state, consisting of about seventy male and female pupils, who were in a course of training for the business of teaching, and most of whom I understand were ready to enter the winter schools whenever their services might be wanted.

The course of instruction was fully developed in the progress of the examination, or rather of the regular exercises of the day, as I was assured no preparation had been made for the occasion ; and I was exceedingly pleased with the elementary and analytical processes in all the branches taught in the school. Every thing had a direct bearing upon the great business of teaching, for which the pupils were preparing, and their prompt and intelligible answers plainly indicated, not only the perfect competence of the teacher, but their own diligence and success in their studies.

Upon the whole, I have rarely, if ever, visited a seminary better regulated and instructed than the Normal School in Barre, or one promising to furnish so many well-trained teachers for the primary schools of the Commonwealth.

All which is respectfully submitted.

H. HUMPHREY.

Amherst College, December 1, 1841.

REPORT

ON THE

BRIDGEWATER NORMAL SCHOOL.

The committee on the Normal School at Bridgewater, having attended the quarterly examinations by one or more of their numbers, during the year past, are happy to express their approbation of the school, and consider it to have been, thus far, a highly successful experiment. Mr Tillinghast, the Principal, is an accomplished teacher, and is well qualified to be an instructor of teachers. He has been very assiduous in the discharge of his important duties. He treats his pupils in a gentlemanly manner, and good order and decorum of conduct are primary characteristics of the school. A marked advancement in the pupils has been visible at each successive examination.

The number of pupils for the last quarter was fifty-two, and it was expected that about fifteen would leave at its close, to be employed as teachers, some of whom are expected to return hereafter to rejoin the school.

A Model School, in a convenient apartment adjoining the principal building, has been kept the most of the past season, and taught by a number of the pupils in rotation. This has been highly acceptable to the parents of those children who have attended the model school. Mr. Goddard, of Boston, has been with Mr Tillinghast for some time past, and is a very competent and efficient assistant.

The people of Bridgewater are very friendly to the school, and give it their countenance and encouragement. Numbers

of people from that and the neighboring towns usually attend the quarterly examinations. The Hon. Seth Sprague, Jr., has lately added some excellent articles to their apparatus, of the value of one hundred dollars.

For the committee,

THOMAS ROBBINS.

Boston, *December* 30, 1841.

The Committee, appointed by the Board of Education to consider the state of the Normal Schools, and the expediency of their continuance, beg leave to

REPORT:

The Normal Schools were established in the towns of Lexington, Barre, and Bridgewater, as follows—

The school at Lexington, on the 1st Wednesday of July A. D. 1839.

The school at Barre, on the 1st Wednesday of September, A. D. 1839.

The school at Bridgewater, on the 2d Wednesday of September, A. D. 1840.

By an arrangement made with the inhabitants of those towns, respectively, liberal contributions were made by them, and were procured from inhabitants of the towns in their vicinity, for the purchase of apparatus and libraries, and the fitting-up of school rooms and boarding houses, on condition that the schools should be maintained in said towns, for the space of three years; and this arrangement will accordingly terminate, with reference to the different schools, as follows—

Lexington school, 1st Wednesday of July, 1842.

Barre school, 1st Wednesday of September, 1842.

Bridgewater school, 2d Wednesday of September, 1843.

The report of the Treasurer of the Board of Education shows, that the funds now available in the hands of the Board, amount to the sum of \$7,781 51.

If the arrangements above referred to, are carried out, there will remain in the hands of the Board, at the expiration of the three years, a small balance of the fund, the amount of which cannot now be ascertained, as the expenses of the three schools will depend materially upon the numbers of pupils who shall hereafter attend.

It will be perceived, therefore, that some provision must be made, by the Legislature, for the future support of the Normal Schools, or they will close at, or near the times above stated.

The question, then, arises, whether it is expedient that the Legislature should make such provision—and, upon this question, the committee are unanimous in an affirmative opinion.

That opinion is based upon the general reasons which existed at the time of the organization of those institutions, confirmed, as its correctness has been, by subsequent experience.

It is presumed that no person, who considers the immense influence which is to result from their labors, is prepared to take the ground, that the teachers of our Common Schools are sufficiently qualified for the stations they fill. There are, it is true, very many highly honorable exceptions. But these very persons will be the first to admit, that their qualifications have been derived, rather from a long experience in the exercise of the art, than from their, otherwise, unaided sagacity in the business of instruction.

But, from the committees of the different school districts, from the friends of education, in all parts of the Commonwealth, the call is loud and uniform,—“Give us better teachers!” The charge against many of them is, that they are, themselves, deficient in the knowledge of the branches which they pretend to teach,—and that, whatever their aptitude to teach may be, they have not the knowledge of those branches which the law requires they should impart to others. But, it is said of others, not that they are men deficient in intellect, or in education, but that they lack experience. Many of them are well versed in the higher studies taught in our colleges; and, perhaps, are qualified to impart their knowledge to a mature mind; but yet these persons may have less aptness to teach, less ability to manage and govern a school of young pupils, than other individuals, of more moderate powers, whose talents have been quickened by use and regulated by cultivation.

Of all the professions, that of a teacher is eminently practi-

cal. He has to deal with mind,—with mind, too, in all its variety of character. And yet, though he has to do with a subject which is least understood, and the most difficult to be comprehended, there is less attention paid to qualifications, than in any other profession or trade.

A few days, or, at most, a few weeks, are sufficient to explain to a young man the principles of architecture, the uses of the different tools, and the strength, durability, and quality of materials; but, instead of sending him to a scientific lecturer, we apprentice him to a practical mechanic, that he may acquire a knowledge of his art by long years of patient and laborious application.

To qualify a student in the legal profession, we indeed place him under the care of scientific instructors; but, until the principles which he is taught are familiarized by practice, he will be of no advantage to his clients, and will arrive at no eminence in the ranks of his profession.

In the healing art, practice is the very handmaid of science; and when we call in either a physician or a surgeon, we pass by the man who has merely a knowledge of books, and seek the assistance of him who has grown wise in the school of experience.

Why should we not adopt the same course with those to whom we entrust the minds of our children? Why not qualify them beforehand for the discharge of their duties, instead of placing them at once in a most responsible situation, to gather wisdom at the expense of the minds and morals of their pupils?

These suggestions have been expressed, both before and since the establishment of the Normal Schools;—and the grants made for the establishment of those institutions were for the purpose of remedying existing evils. The schools have been in operation, exclusive of vacations, two of them for about two years, and the third for about one year. The question arises, have they answered, or have they indicated that they will answer, the object?—or, in other words, have the unremitting exertions

of three learned and experienced teachers, bestowed upon those who were anxious to learn the art of teaching, enabled those persons to perform with more ability the duties to which they have devoted themselves?

It would seem, that a question of this kind would carry its own answer with it; and we apprehend that, although from the limited number of teachers which these schools have sent forth, the evidence of their usefulness has been brought home to the knowledge of but a small portion of the people of the Commonwealth, yet the evidence they have furnished is in accordance with the answer which that question indicates.

Testing the utility of these institutions by the principles which we apply in other cases, we should inquire, What has been the improvement of the Normal scholars in their elementary studies,—in the acquisition of new branches, and in the science of teaching? How have they appeared at the examinations of the schools? What has been their success in teaching? And most of all, what estimate have the districts in which they have taught, placed upon their practical skill? All these questions are susceptible of a satisfactory answer. The examinations have been fully attended; and, in the opinion, not only of their visiting committees, but of gentlemen who attended for the purpose of ascertaining the utility of the experiment, they have reflected great credit upon both the instructors and pupils, and upon the plan itself.

Indeed, those examinations have changed the opinions of those, who at first doubted the expediency of the institutions; and many who went prepared to censure, returned to approve.

But, the success which has followed the labors of the Normal scholars is, perhaps, the best evidence in favor of the schools. But few of them have ever completed the course of education, contemplated either by the Board, or by the Principals of the different institutions. It would be reasonable, therefore, to suppose that, in some cases, they would fail to win the approval of their employers. But, in most instances, they

have given, as it is believed, unexpected satisfaction ; and, such is the estimation in which their services have been held, that many districts, which have once employed Normal scholars, are extremely unwilling to employ any other teachers. Nor is this opinion confined to those districts. The people in the vicinity of the several schools, who have the best means of knowledge, are uniform in their commendation ; and if there are any who are faithless in the experiment, they are those who have paid little attention to the subject, and whose opinions are made up of theoretical speculations.

The committee, therefore, in view of the facts which have fallen under their own observation, and in accordance with what they believe to be the wishes and the wants of the community, are unanimous in the expression of an opinion, that suitable provision should be made by the Legislature, for the continued support of the three Normal Schools.

W. G. BATES, *Chairman.*

To amount paid sundry bills of expense of the		
Normal School, Barre, viz:—		
Feb. 4,	N. B. Chamberlain's bill, pneumatic apparatus, - -	100 00
Mar. 5,	S. P. Newman's bill, services as principal, quarter ending March 1, -	350 00
April 21,	Services of an assistant, term end'g Apr. 7,	162 50
June 4,	S. P. Newman's bill, services as principal, quarter ending June 1, -	350 00
	Services of an assistant two weeks, 25 00	375 00
Sept. 16,	S. P. Newman's bill, services as principal, quarter ending Sept. 1, -	350 00
Dec. 18,	Do. do. quarter ending Dec. 1, 350 00	
	Services of sundry assistants, 222 50	572 50
		<u>1,910 00</u>
To amount paid sundry bills of expense of the		
Normal School, Lexington, viz:—		
April 23,	C. Pierce's bill, services as principal, quarter ending April 3, -	375 00
	Sundry bills repairs, -	20 63
	Assistance in Lectures, -	36 23
		<u>431 86</u>
July 3,	C. Pierce's bill, services as principal, quarter ending this day, -	375 00
	Sundry repairs, advertising, &c. 13 25	
" 12,	B. Muzzy's bill, rent and taxes of buildings, 1 year, to July 1, -	388 25
		<u>106 78</u>
		926 89
	Carried over, -	<u>\$5,008 79</u>

\$5,590 94

Cr.

ACCOUNT—Continued.

Dr.

		1841	1841	Amount brought over,	
		Dec. 31,	By balance to new account, due the Treasurer,		\$5,590 94
1841	Oct. 6,	Amount brought over,	-		
		C. Pierce's bill, services as principal, quarter ending Oct. 3,	375 00		
		Sundry bills repairs,	26 71		218 49
			401 71		
Dec. 27,	C. Pierce's bill, services as principal, quarter ending Jan. 3, 1842,	-	375 00		
			776 71		
		To amount paid sundry bills advertising:—			
Jan. 2,	Christian Register,	-	2 35		
" 15,	L. Huntress,	-	11 75		
Feb. 25,	Daily Advertiser,	-	4 33		
Mar. 20,	Trumpet,	-	2 50		
" 30,	Gloucester Telegraph,	-	1 50		
Sept. 22,	Massachusetts Spy,	-	1 50		
			23 93		
1842					
Jan. 1,	To balance from old account, due the Treasurer,	\$218 49			
					\$5,809 43

Errors Excepted.

Boston, December 28, 1841.

CHARLES H. MILLS,

Treasurer Board of Education.

JAN. 12th, 1842.—This account has been examined and compared with the vouchers for the several items thereof, and found to be correctly cast, and properly vouched.

By the Finance Committee.

R. RANTOUL, JR., Chairman.

FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

GENTLEMEN :—

At the close of another year, I present to the Board my Fifth Annual Report.

The promises referred to in my last report, of a growing interest in our Common Schools, and of their corresponding prosperity, have been fully redeemed.

In so extensive an enterprise as that of perfecting a system of means for the universal education of a people, striking results cannot be expected, in a single year. Much light must be diffused, many erroneous opinions must be rectified, many prejudices allayed, before all classes of men, working freely and voluntarily, will work harmoniously for a common end. Circumstances too, that are untoward, may, for a season, retard the advancement which they cannot overcome. Sufficient time, however, has now elapsed, since the adoption by the State, of the present plan for the extension of educational means, to enable us, like a voyager who is doubtful of his course, to take an observation, and thence to discover whether we are making progress towards the destined point.

It is now four years since I prepared the Abstract of the School Returns for 1837, and made my First Annual Report to the Board.

Since that time, the amount of appropriations made by the towns for the wages and board of the teachers and fuel for the schools, has increased more than one hundred thousand dollars.

During the same time, the schools have been lengthened, on an average, almost three weeks each, which for three thousand one hundred and three, (the number of public schools kept last year in the State,) amounts in the whole to more than one hundred and seventy-five years.

The average wages of male teachers, for the same period, have advanced thirty-three per cent. ; those of females, a little more than twelve and a half per cent. I am satisfied that the value of the services of both sexes has increased in a much greater ratio than that of their compensation.

There were one hundred and eighty-five more public schools last year, than in 1837, which is rather less than the ratio of increase in the number of children between the ages of 4 and 16 years. This favorable result is owing to the union of small districts. The number of male teachers has increased one hundred and twenty-one ; that of females, five hundred and twenty-one, which shows the growing and most beneficial practice of employing female teachers for small schools and female assistants in large ones.

Many towns in the State, during the last year, completed the renovation of all the schoolhouses within their respective limits.

From a perusal of the school committees' reports for the last year, it appears that the number of schools broken up by the insubordination of the scholars, was not more than one tenth part what it was for the preceding year. This gain to the honor of the schools,—or rather this exemption from disgrace,—is to be attributed to the combined causes of better modes of government by the teachers, more faithful supervision by the committees, a more extended personal acquaintance on the part of parents, and especially to the practice of making a report to the towns of the condition of the schools, and the conduct of the scholars. Few boys between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one years are so depraved and shameless as not to recoil at the idea of being reported for misconduct, in open town-meeting, and of having an attested record of their disgrace transmitted to the seat of government, with the chance, should they persist in their incorrigibleness for two or three years, of finding themselves historically known to other countries and times, through the medium of the school abstracts. The cases of schools brought to a violent termination, during

the last year, by the insubordination of the scholars, happened almost invariably, in those towns and sections of counties in the State, where I have found the least sympathy and co-operation in my labors.

The interior condition of the schools, as to order, thoroughness, progress, manners, and so forth, not being susceptible of tabular statement or statistical exhibition, must be inferred from these outward and palpable evidences of their advancement.

These are some of the results, at which the co-workers in the noble cause of education may congratulate themselves ;—results which will furnish, at once the richest reward for past efforts and the highest incentive to future exertions.

My official duties, during the past year, have been substantially the same in kind, as those detailed in former reports ; but the increased interest which the Massachusetts school system has excited in other States, has imposed upon me the labor of a more extensive correspondence.

PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE FOR COUNTY CONVENTIONS.

The County Common School Conventions have, generally, been much better attended than during the preceding year. These annual county meetings, which have now been held for five successive years in the counties of the State, have been eminently useful in diffusing information, as to a better system of school district organization, better modes of instruction, and so forth. Especially, by bringing the sympathy of numbers to bear upon individuals, they have diffused a spirit and created an energy, more worthy of a cause which carries so much of the happiness of the community in its bosom. But it seems to me that the mode of operation heretofore pursued, may now be modified with evident advantage.

To explain my views in regard to the most eligible course for the future, it will be necessary to recur for a moment to the practice of the past. At the county conventions, a considerable

portion of the day has usually been spent in discussing such topics as were deemed most intimately connected with the welfare of the schools, in the section of country where the meetings were respectively held. All persons present have been invited to participate in the proceedings. Questions have been freely put and replies given. On these occasions I have always been requested to deliver an address in the course of the day, and have never felt at liberty to decline the invitation. I have also, invariably held myself ready to answer such inquiries and to meet such suggestions as might be proposed ; but the friends of education assembled from the vicinity, have always been consulted as to the topics for discussion, and through the medium of a committee have generally proposed them. Out of a general similarity of circumstances and of objects, has naturally arisen a considerable degree of uniformity in the modes of proceeding ; and it is with the sincerest pleasure that I bear witness, that at all times, and in all places, the greatest harmony has prevailed. I do not mean that opinions have always coincided, but that different views have been presented in an amicable spirit ; and it has oftentimes happened that some modified course,—some third measure, has been elicited, better than either of those originally suggested.

Such has been the common mode of proceeding, the advantages of which have been clearly discoverable in regard to those towns and districts which have been most regularly and fully represented at the meetings. In regard to a considerable number of towns, an entire reform in their schools has been distinctly traceable to the fact, that a few of their most worthy and influential inhabitants had been present at one of these conventions ; and, having listened to the counsels or been inspired by the zeal of their fellow-citizens from other towns, have returned home to diffuse the information they had obtained, and to animate others with the spirit they had caught.

But the benefits of this course are too limited. It has served the purpose of exciting an interest, but it will not consummate the work of reform. Except in some half dozen or dozen cases,

the conventions have lasted but a single day. Persons coming from any considerable distance, desire to leave at an early hour that they may return home ; and as some time is necessarily spent in organization and in preliminary arrangements, the day is shortened at both ends. Unlike most other conventions, too, these are attended by ladies, whose paramount influence in the cause of education renders their presence exceedingly desirable ; and this is another reason for dissolving the meetings at an early hour. In addition to this, most of the counties are too large in point of territory, to allow persons whose residence is remote from the respective places of meeting, to go and return on the same day ; although in some of the counties whose territory is greatest, there are individuals who have never failed of being present at them. It may be said, indeed, that other conventions, abolitional or political, are attended by persons who traverse half the length of the State for the purpose ; that they are continued for two or more days ; or, if held but for one, that the meeting is prolonged by borrowing many hours from the night. But as an answer to this, it must be remembered that the cause of education,—the cause of ransoming our own children from the bondage of ignorance and vice,—the cause which is not merely to affect, but to control their destiny, and that of the Republic, through all future time,—has not yet aroused that degree of enthusiasm which will gather crowds of people from distant places, and hold them together for days in succession, while they descant upon their own virtues and denounce the wickedness of their opponents.

But the best minds in our community have been reached. What is now wanted is to reach another class of persons, numerically greater, but having less appreciation of the value of education, and less knowledge of the means by which it should be conducted. This class of persons do not attend the county conventions, either from a lack of interest in the general subject ; or because the distance is too great ; or because the conventions are held in the day-time, which they appropriate to labor. But many of this class would attend such a meeting in their

own town, especially if held in the evening. What seems to be desirable now is, more frequent meetings in smaller sections of territory, that sounder views and a livelier interest may be carried to the doors of those who will not go abroad to obtain them. Such has been the course pursued from the beginning, in Connecticut, whose laws on the subject have been, in many respects, very similar to our own.

Another fact having a strong bearing upon the question is, that the several counties differ so much in size and population, that a provision for one public meeting in each county, each year, though in form equal, is in reality most unequal. In one county there are forty-six towns, in another fifty-five; while in one there are but three, and in Nantucket, the limits of the town and county are coincident. In the two former the population is about one hundred thousand each, while in one of the latter it is less than ten thousand, and in the other less than four thousand. I have endeavored as far as possible to meet this difference, by holding in some of the larger and less favorably situated counties, more meetings than the law requires; but I feel constrained to express the opinion that health and strength will fail any incumbent of the office I fill, who, in addition to its legal duties, shall undertake many supernumerary labors.

Again,—as it will be the object of a part of this report to show,—very striking contrasts exist between the different counties and towns in the State, in respect to the condition of their schools, the amount of funds appropriated for their support, and the superintendence and encouragement bestowed upon them. Those towns and counties where the insensibility to the claims of this cause is the most profound, need the most strenuous and persevering application of means to rouse them from their lethargy, and to render them painfully alive to that inferiority of privileges under which their children are suffering;—an inferiority which is now unobserved, but which, as soon as these children enter upon the stage of life, will be revealed by a manifestation of inferiority in attainments, in power, and in all the elements of respectability and usefulness.

Although, therefore, the system of annual county meetings seems clearly the best that could have been devised, for the past, yet for the future, it seems equally clear that such a modification of the law as would provide for meetings to be held more frequently, and for smaller sections of territory, and distributed over the State more according to the population and the differing wants of different sections, would now yield superior advantages. As the grand features of the cause have, within the last few years, been brought out by discussions, addresses, and the circulation of documents, the public mind is prepared to enter upon a more particular and detailed examination of those constituent parts, all of which must be correctly understood and wisely arranged, before the system will work with ease and energy. This object will require a longer time for its accomplishment, and will be less perfectly effected under the present arrangement, than under the one here proposed.

SCHOOL RETURNS AND REPORTS.

Although the reports of the school committees, for the past year, were more voluminous than for the preceding, yet for reasons stated in the brief prefatory notice prefixed to the last abstract, the proportion of selections made from them, was far less than before. It seems proper, therefore, to give a short summary of some important facts and views which are contained in the reports themselves, but which do not appear in the abstract, on account of the brevity of the selections made for it. With these, some considerations drawn from the statistical returns, will, almost necessarily, be mingled.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

The reports of the committees show that the true principles on which school districts should be formed, are now much better understood than formerly. A check has been given to the self-destructive practice of dividing and subdividing territory

in order to bring the school near to every man's door. Our school districts are already so numerous, that just in the direct ratio in which the number is increased, is the value of our school system diminished. There is but one class of persons in the whole community,—and that class not only small in number, but the least entitled to favor,—who are beneficially interested in the establishment of small and feeble districts. This class consists of the very poorest teachers in the State, or of those who immigrate here from other States or countries, in quest of employment as teachers,—who are willing to teach for the lowest compensation,—and for whose services even the lowest is too high. These teachers may safely look upon the small and feeble districts as estates in expectancy. Such districts, having destroyed their resources by dividing them, must remain stationary from year to year, amidst surrounding improvement ; and hence, being unable to command more valuable services, they will be compelled to grant a small annual pension to ignorance and imbecility, and this class of teachers stands ready to be their pensionaries.

SCHOOLHOUSES.

In preparing the abstract, I have made but very few and brief selections from the committees' reports, on the subject of schoolhouses. It is proper, therefore, to say that the reports were characterized by a fulness and an emphasis on this topic, which they have never before exhibited. The closeness of the relation which a schoolhouse, well planned, situated, built and furnished, bears to order, good manners, intellectual proficiency, and the culture of the social and even the moral sentiments of the pupils, as well as upon the character of the district where it is situated, has not, in any previous year, been so vividly and earnestly presented ;—and, on the other hand, the loss, mischief, disease, disgrace, of a mean schoolhouse, have never been illustrated by so copious a reference to facts, or enforced by such an array of argument and by such earnestness of expostulation and pungency of ridicule. In the committees'

descriptions of bad schoolhouses may be found, in about equal proportions, most abundant materials both for tragedy and comedy.

In fine, a knowledge of the great truth is more extensively diffused and acted upon, that the Creator has established LAWS, in regard to our physical as well as in regard to our moral nature; that He annexes the enjoyment of health, strength and length of days to their observance, but punishes their violation with pain, sickness and premature death; that He has made no revelation in regard to the physical laws, but has left us to discover and obey them and to receive our reward; or, at our option, but at our peril, to remain in ignorance and disobedience, and incur their certain retributions. A strained and uncomfortable posture long enforced; sudden transitions from one extreme of temperature to another, or excessive heat at the head, while the feet are benumbed with cold; a strong light striking directly into the eye, while the book or paper is thrown into shade; and the breathing of noxious air, are offences against the wise and benign laws of nature, which never escape with impunity. Though committed in ignorance, nay, though enforced by parental authority upon thoughtless and inexperienced childhood, they must be expiated by suffering; for they belong to that extensive class of "iniquities," which, when committed by the "fathers," are "visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." It is to be earnestly hoped that the school committees will persevere in the laudable practice they have so well begun, until there shall not remain a town in the State which boasts upon paper of its temples to science, but has nought to show for them, in reality, but receptacles for penal confinement, and houses, not for the cure, but for the propagation, of disease.

During the last year, the city of Salem and the village of Cabotville in Springfield, have given the best specimens of school-house architecture. Salem has erected several new school-houses, remodelled others, and put the residue in a condition of good repair. In Cabotville, the wise step was first

taken of uniting two contiguous districts. The united district is erecting, and has almost completed a beautiful house, far superior to any other in all the middle or western part of the State. Its cost is estimated at ten thousand dollars. As great attention has been paid to the model of these edifices, I deem it useful to give a plan of them at the close of this Report. The plan of the house for the high school at Lowell, which has lately gone into operation, is also given, as it is different from both the others and is very well devised. Our ingenious mechanics and architects can select any one of them as a model, or they may attempt a combination which will be an improvement upon all. These and several others, erected during the last year, are ornaments to the respective places of their location, an honor to their inhabitants and a pledge of the elevated character of their posterity.

APPROPRIATIONS OF MONEY BY THE TOWNS.

The appropriations by the towns continue to increase. Every year, also, less and less of the money granted, is diverted from its legitimate objects, viz., the payments for the wages and board of teachers, and fuel for the schools,) to defray expenses for school furniture, for repairs of the schoolhouse, and, in some cases, to pay the rent of a room for the school. These cases of an unlawful diversion of the town's money have heretofore been very frequent; but such misapplications are now generally regarded in their true character, as little less than an embezzlement of funds provided for one of the most sacred of objects. In proportion as these illegal practices cease, the actual increase of the sum expended for the schools, exceeds that which is shown by the statistical tables.

AMOUNT AND REGULARITY OF ATTENDANCE.

The improvement of the last year upon the preceding, in regard to the amount and regularity of attendance, is very striking.

After deducting the scholars under 4 and over 16 years of age, from the whole number who attended school, both for the year 1839-40, and the year 1840-41, (those under 4 from the summer, and those over 16 from the winter schools,) the increase of attendance for the last, over the preceding year, was, for summer, seven thousand four hundred and twenty-eight; and for winter, eight thousand six hundred and twenty-one. Making all due allowance for the increase in the number of children, there will still remain the most gratifying evidence of improvement in the amount of attendance. It will thus be seen that a most important inroad has been made upon the pernicious practice of absence and irregularity. Some differences, of course, will be occasioned in the amount of attendance, from year to year, by the open or blocked-up condition of the roads, or by the greater or less prevalence of epidemics; and, in these respects, the last winter had some advantage over the preceding; but this great and most encouraging difference is mainly attributable to two causes,—first, to the exertions of the friends of education in diffusing a knowledge of the evils of irregular attendance; and secondly, to the improved condition of the schoolhouses, by virtue of which, a less amount of colds and coughs, of temporary indisposition or of permanent disease, was inflicted upon the children.

It is most earnestly to be hoped, and indeed, it is confidently to be expected, when the committees and other friends of the cause shall see with what a substantial reward their generous efforts to secure a better attendance upon the schools, have been crowned, they will be animated to renewed exertions for the more full accomplishment of the same end. It is almost incredible how great an evil yet remains to be overcome. To any one who at all comprehends the relation, as one of cause and effect, which a good Common School education bears to the welfare of the individual and the happiness of the community, the meager and scanty portion of that education which many of our children now obtain, in consequence of neglecting the means provided for them, is most appalling.

If the number of children under 4 years of age, who attended school during the last year, be deducted from the average* of attendance in summer, and the number of those over 16 years of age, who attended school, be also deducted from the average* of attendance in winter, the average attendance of those between 4 and 16 years of age, will stand thus:

For summer,	-	-	89,069
“ winter,	-	-	107,276

Now, allowing twelve thousand as the number of children in the State, who derive their whole education from academies and private schools, and who, therefore, are not dependent upon the Common Schools at all; and deducting this number from the number of children in the State, who are between the ages of 4 and 16 years, (thus, $184,392 - 12,000 = 172,392$,) and the proportion of those who attended the Common Schools in summer, compared with the whole number dependent upon those schools, is as 89,069 to 172,392, or a very little more than one half; and the proportion of those who attended the same schools, in winter, as compared with the whole number dependent upon them, is as 107,276 to 172,392, or considerably less than eleven seventeenths.

Hence it appears that the amount of absence of those supposed to be dependent upon the Common Schools, was,

For summer,	-	-	83,323
“ winter,	-	-	65,116

Supposing this enormous privation, instead of being spread over the whole State, and being lost to the sight of men by its diffusion and by its commonness, had fallen exclusively upon a single section;—supposing that a single portion of the territory of the Commonwealth, had been selected and doomed to bear the entire loss,—in that case, the absence, even in winter, when it was more than eighteen thousand less than in summer, would have exceeded the number of all the children between

* In the Report of last year, page 66, the word “aggregate” was inadvertently printed, in these two places, instead of the word “average.” Although the sense is apparent from the context, yet it is deemed advisable to refer to the error.

4 and 16 years of age, in the five western counties of Berkshire, Hampshire, Hampden, Franklin and Worcester. It would have exceeded, by more than ten thousand, all the children between 4 and 16 years of age, in the six south-eastern counties of Norfolk, Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes county and Nantucket; and it would have been nearly equal to all the children, between the same ages, in the three great counties of Suffolk, Essex and Middlesex;—the amount of absence in the summer, indeed, would have exceeded the number of children in the three last-named counties, by more than sixteen thousand. Were all the children in either of these three great sections of the Commonwealth wholly deprived of the privileges of a Common School education, would not the State,—foreseeing the inevitable calamities which, in the immutable order of events, must result from rearing so large a portion of its population in ignorance,—be filled with alarm, and impelled by the instinct of self-preservation, to seek for an antidote? But is the evil which this fact infallibly prophecies, any less dangerous or imminent, because, instead of shrouding one particular section of the Commonwealth in night, it is diffused over the entire surface of the State, darkening the common atmosphere and blinding the vision of the whole people?

It is the simple instrument of the school Register by which these alarming facts have been detected and exposed. I am happy to find, both from personal communications and correspondence, and from the frequent references made to it in the school committees' reports, that the value of the register is now almost universally seen and acknowledged; and that those who, through shortsightedness or perversity, opposed its introduction, are now satisfied, or, at least, silenced, by the beneficial results to which it has led. Here and there, indeed, complaint is still made by the committees, of some slothful or stupid teacher who has too little fidelity to deliver over or transmit the register to them at the close of the term, or too little skill to keep it in an intelligible manner. To prevent this delinquency, some towns have passed a vote that the

teachers shall not be paid, until they have delivered over the registers to the committee.

LENGTH OF SCHOOLS.

The amount of increase in the length of the schools has been already stated. It is obvious that one of the tendencies of prolonging the school term is, to diminish the average of attendance; because, while parents and guardians are to be found who think they cannot afford to send their children during the whole even of a short term, they will be still more disinclined to send them during the whole of a long one. It is gratifying, therefore, to find that the length of the schools and the average of attendance are simultaneously increasing.

It will, of course, be understood that the average increase in the length of the schools, before referred to, does not mean that each school has been prolonged about three weeks since the year 1837. In some towns they have not been lengthened at all, and in others a week or fortnight only has been added. A considerable part of the residue is made up by the establishment of what, in this State, are called *annual schools*, that is, schools which are kept continuously through the year, with only such short vacations as are customary in all schools. This class of annual schools, which is regularly increasing, has the merit of furnishing permanent employment for a larger number of those persons who desire to make the honorable office of teaching a profession for life. One of the greatest benefits of the annual school is, that it supersedes the necessity of a quarterly, or at most, a semi-annual change of teachers. Every husbandman knows the consequence of renting his farm, each successive year, to a new lessee, each of whom in succession, is interested to carry away as much from the premises, and to leave as little, as he can. Not expecting to occupy the farm the next year, all his plans are laid with reference to the profits of the present. The teacher hired for a single term, stands in a similar relation to his employers. After making all due allowances, therefore, for the higher motives which should ani-

mate the teacher of a school, as compared with the lessee of a farm, can we expect that the interests of a school district will flourish as they ought, under circumstances so analogous to those which would impoverish an estate ?

UNIFORMITY OF SCHOOL BOOKS.

On this subject, although a reform is evidently begun, yet the complaints of the committees are nearly as loud, and their expostulations as earnest as heretofore. A clearer view of the mischievous effects of this unnecessary evil, causes a less degree of it to be equally deplored. In regard to most of the other defects in our school system, some increase of expense is often the ready reply to appeals for improvement ; but, in regard to text books, uniformity and economy go hand in hand, while the evil of diversity brings with it the evil of a wasteful expenditure.

The diversity of school books in the State, is also a serious inconvenience to teachers, and through them it reacts injuriously upon the schools. As a matter of fact, it will be found that but few teachers who keep school several successive years in as many different towns, supply themselves with the kinds of books used in their respective schools. They regard the expense as an insuperable obstacle, unless it is made up to them by an increase of their wages, and this the districts are unwilling to make. Hence, when the teachers enter the school, they are dependent upon their scholars for books. At the time of recitation, and when each pupil needs his own book, the teacher borrows one for his private use ; or, what would generally be worse, he hears the recitation without one. Hence the scholars are not only deprived of their books when needed, but the teacher never prepares himself upon the lesson before hearing it. This previous preparation on the lessons every teacher ought to make, so that all questions arising upon them may be familiar to him, and so that he may adapt his questions to the capacities of the scholars, and not take the chance of putting the easiest questions to the most bright and forward

scholars, and the hardest ones to the dullards. But it is impossible to trace out, into their innumerable ramifications, all the evils which arise from the present multiplicity of our school books.

In regard to the selection of books by committees, I have had occasion, during the last year, to notice a mistake or oversight which deserves to be mentioned. It consists in the selection of books, which, on important points, conflict with each other, and therefore, leave teacher and pupil in doubt what course to pursue ;—as, for instance, the selection of Webster's Dictionary, with Worcester's or Pierpont's Reading Books, where the rules for pronunciation contained in the former, are so different from those of the latter.

TEACHERS.

While the condition of the school is but a reflection of the image of the teacher, his qualifications are too important to be passed over in silence. Many facts conspire to prove that, for a long period, the teachers of our schools have not been so well qualified for their duties, nor devoted themselves with so great a degree of fidelity, or under circumstances so favorable to success, as during the last school year. In many towns there has been a most earnest and importunate demand for those of satisfactory attainments and unexceptionable character. When presented as candidates, they have been subjected to a far more scrutinizing examination, both in regard to literary qualifications and to their credentials of fitness for the management of a school, than ever before. They have also received more counsel and aid from school committees, whose increased visitations to the schools have tended strongly to repress the spirit of insubordination, and to substitute diligence and good manners for idleness and mischief. In addition to this, I have conclusive reasons for believing that the teachers of the State, taken as a body, have never before exerted themselves so much to understand and to perform their duty, and

to answer the rising demands of the community upon them. During the last year I met, by invitation, several large bodies of teachers,—in one instance not less than two hundred, assembled together from a wide circle to interchange views, and to discuss subjects pertaining to their employment. Now this increased demand of the public for higher qualifications made known to teachers in no ambiguous manner; this coöperation and sympathy of the school committees; this advancement of teachers as a body, to a point of elevation where they stand more conspicuously in the public eye; and, above all, the stronger desire on their own part to acquit themselves creditably, and to win the honor of having their schools well reported to the towns by the committees, cannot have existed without producing effects most salutary and extensive. Yet, notwithstanding these truths, in no previous year has the voice of approval, emanating from the reports, been so frequently drowned in that of condemnation. In no previous year, have the committees drawn the line of demarcation with such breadth and clearness, between teachers as they are, and teachers as they should be; nor ever before has there been any thing like the indignant and heart-felt remonstrance against the usurpation of a teacher's duties and responsibilities, by ignorance and inaptitude and self-conceit. The explanation of this is, not a greater severity or uncharitableness of judgment, on the part of committees, but a clearer perception of long-existing, but previously unrecognized wants. The demand for better qualifications has outstripped the supply. A demand for better teachers may arise almost instantaneously on a perception of the incompetency of existing ones. But the supply requires time and labor; for a good teacher cannot be prepared without delay, as a merchant or manufacturer fills an order for goods. Even Adam Smith excepts education from the mercantile or economical law, that the supply will follow and equal the demand. "In every age, even among the heathen," says Martin Luther, "the necessity has been felt of having good schoolmasters, in order to make any thing respectable of a nation. But surely we are not to sit still and wait until they

grow up of themselves. We can neither chop them out of wood, nor hew them out of stone. God will work no miracles to furnish that which we have means to provide. We must, therefore, apply our care and money to train up and make them." In accordance with this idea, it seems to me that justice and equity towards teachers demand that the tone of condemnation should not rise to a higher pitch, until opportunities and inducements shall have been offered to them for better preparation ; and that every friend of education who insists upon qualifications superior to the present, is bound to do his part towards furnishing facilities and encouragements by which they can be acquired. We cannot consistently denounce a state of things which we do nothing to improve.

In treating of the subject of teachers, the remark is not infrequently made by the committees, that the law exacts of them a duty impossible to be fulfilled. They acknowledge that they can determine the literary qualifications of a candidate ; but they aver that they have no means of ascertaining his moral worth, his ability to communicate what he knows, or the soundness of his judgment and discretion in the general management of a school. That there is some apparent justness in this defensive allegation, I would not deny ; but I beg leave most respectfully to inquire whether it is not set forth much too broadly. In other words, are there not certain tests or criteria which the committee may adopt, which would, at least in the great majority of cases, save them from imposition and the mortification of having given an undeserved approval. If the law really commands impossibilities, it should be repealed ; if it does not, its requisitions are too important to be practically annulled. The language of the statute is, "The school committee shall require full and satisfactory evidence of the good moral character of all instructors who may be employed in the public schools in their town ; and shall ascertain by personal examination, their literary qualifications and capacity for the government of schools." [R. S., Ch. 23, § 13.]

Here, *moral character* is made a first and indispensable condition of approval. In cases, where the candidate is a neighbor

or a townsman, his moral character will, of course, be known to the committee. If he comes from a distance, they must ordinarily rely on his credentials; but it is still within their province to decide upon the sufficiency of those credentials, both as to the fulness of their import, and their authenticity or the trustworthiness of the individuals whose signatures they bear. Here, it is worthy of their consideration, why so many of our teachers go to a great distance from home to keep school. In very many instances, towns which are fifty or a hundred miles apart, seem to have exchanged teachers. When a candidate, with glowing recommendations, comes from another State, or from a distant part of our own, in quest of a school, the inquiry very naturally arises, why his distinguished services were not in demand nearer home. Sometimes, indeed, there exist good reasons to lead a person abroad from the town of his nativity or residence; and such reasons, it is always to be supposed, will rebut the adverse presumption, which so naturally arises when a man who aspires to the moral dignity of a teacher is found itinerating the country, like a pedler, to dispose of his services;—and this too, (as, in some instances, has actually happened,) after examining the school abstracts, to learn in what towns he would be most likely to find purchasers, indifferent to the quality of his wares.

In regard to the testimonials presented, I would suggest the propriety of the committees' entering the names, in their book of records, of all persons who have signed a certificate of good moral character in behalf of any candidate. The law requires each school committee to keep a book of records; and in this book, the names of all the candidates they approve, are, or should be, entered.. With these, they might also enter the names of all persons who have vouched for their character; and should the committee, after such fidelity of examination, on this point, as a prudent and discreet man would exercise in regard to his own personal interests, find that they have been deceived, they can then exculpate themselves before the town, by reporting the facts and exposing the names of those individuals by whose recommendations, whether fraudulent or heed-

less, (and, in such a case, heedlessness differs little from fraud,) they have been innocently misled.

The next requisite mentioned in the statute, respects the *literary qualifications* of the candidate and his *capacity for the government of a school*. Here, although the committees concede that they have the means of determining how well the candidate can spell or read, and how much knowledge of grammar, arithmetic or geography, he possesses, by propounding questions or exercises, on these several subjects; yet they aver that they can apply no guage for measuring the capacity of the channel through which these attainments may flow out to fertilize the field of his labors. And again, it is said by the committees that it is impracticable for them to do any thing more than form a general conjecture of the candidate's capacity for government;—that is, his power of determining, at what times, under what circumstances, what amount of, and in what manner, assistance, encouragement or reproof, should be administered to his pupils. Hence, while it is granted on all hands, that the ability to impart knowledge, and the power of managing and governing a school, are as important as scholarship itself;—nay, that without the two former qualities, the latter is rendered nugatory,—it is maintained that one only of the three requisites can be subjected to a test, while the other two must be left to conjecture or chance. Now if this be so,—if two points are necessarily left in doubt, for one that is determined,—if the committee, after availing themselves of all aids, and performing their duty in the most faithful manner, have double the cause for fear that they have for hope; and, so far as an examination is relied upon as a security against incompetence, there are still two chances that their approved candidate will fail, for one that he will succeed; then, indeed, both the committee and the public are placed by the law, in a painful predicament. According to this view of the case, the former are obliged to certify to important facts without the means of knowledge, and the latter to rely upon a guaranty, when the chances that it will prove delusive are as two to one.

Before joining in these strictures upon the law, we ought to

investigate the means by which it can be observed ; because requisitions which aim at so salutary an object, ought not to be rescinded, unless their execution is impracticable.

In the first place, it is obvious that the ability to impart knowledge depends very much upon the modes adopted for the purpose. The greatest talent will be nearly frustrated, if subjected to the use of untoward or inadequate methods. All the vividness and coherence of knowledge are lost in the employment of obscure or circuitous media for its communication. Some of the profoundest and most useful sciences owe their perfection as much to the art which has prepared their instruments, as to the talent that has developed their principles ; and the knowledge of a La Place or a Bowditch would have been almost unavailing without the aid of such workmen as Dolland and Fraunhofer. Every one conversant with schools, must have observed that a much less degree of skill, availing itself of the best methods and instruments, will accomplish more than a much greater degree, which is deprived of the appropriate means of elucidation. For instance, in regard to arithmetic and geography, nothing can supply the want of a blackboard. It is next to impossible,—if, indeed, it is not wholly so,—to teach either of these branches thoroughly or rapidly without it ; or,—which is of still greater importance,—to give the pupil those vivid and ingrained conceptions which will remain a part of the very substance of the mind, while life lasts, instead of such superficial impressions as will fade away by the end of the term. This cheap, simple, and most effective piece of apparatus, the blackboard, which a few years ago, was not known in our schools, is now deemed invaluable and indispensable by all the best teachers in the State. Now, can any thing be more easy, in the examination of a candidate, than to inquire whether he has the command of the blackboard,—in what studies, and in what manner he would use it ? And should the candidate reply that he has never been accustomed to use it, for working out problems in arithmetic, for drawing maps in geography, for spelling, &c. ; or that he has tried it,

and then discarded it as valueless ; can any thing be more certain than that such a candidate is destitute of aptness to teach and unworthy of a certificate of approval ?

So, in regard to the female candidate, who proposes to take charge of small children ;—she, certainly, will fail to provide for them the most agreeable and instructive occupation ; she cannot give them one half the intellectual knowledge she might otherwise impart,—if she does not know how to use the blackboard, in connection with the slate and pencil, for teaching the letters of the alphabet, and rules for sentence-making,—such as the mode of commencing paragraphs, the use of capitals, hyphens, pauses, &c.,—and for commencing to teach the invaluable art of drawing. A few inquiries, on this subject, would determine, to a great extent, the question of the candidate's aptness to teach.

When a visiter, on entering a schoolhouse, sees a blackboard, thrown aside into the wood-shed, or lumbering the entry, but finds none in the schoolroom, he may propose a short stay in that school, so far as the hope of seeing any thing instructive to himself or creditable to the teacher, is concerned.

Reading, is a branch of study of such importance, that different modes of teaching it project a beneficial or a baneful influence over the whole future life, and raise or depress the grade of individual intelligence and capacity into whatever sphere of action the young reader may be afterwards thrown. The metaphor would not one whit overstate the literal truth, were we to say that the teacher, in forming his pupils' habits of reading, encircles their heads with a bright and radiating light, or wraps around them a cloudy medium, which they will carry through life, to enlighten or obscure every object about them, wherever they may go. And is it not easy for the committee to inquire of the candidates, whether it is their invariable habit to search out, and to require the scholars to explain the meaning of all words not understood ; and, after every reading lesson is completed, to call upon the class for a synopsis or general statement, in their own language, of its contents ?

If a teacher omits these practices, so far is he from being apt to teach reading, that he is apt, nay, certain, not to teach it ; but, day after day, to obliterate from the minds of his pupils both the capacity and the desire to master the noble instrument of language.

In regard also, to the first requisite in the mechanical part of reading, viz., pronunciation, cannot the committee ask the candidate whether it is his invariable habit to have a Pronouncing Dictionary always at hand, to which, in all cases of doubt he can immediately refer, not only to ascertain the true pronunciation of the words in our own language, but the true pronunciation of scriptural and of geographical proper names, and also, of such Greek and Latin proper names, as occur in the text books ? The general rules for pronouncing English proper names, differ widely from those by which the pronunciation of proper names, in other languages whether ancient or modern, is determined ; and hence, the pupil in pronouncing the latter according to the analogy of the former, will commit frequent, and to an educated ear, very ridiculous mistakes. But a pupil will naturally follow the analogies of his native tongue, unless he is directed by another standard. What a misfortune to a child to be bred up in the imitation of an outlandish brogue-like or barbarous pronunciation, which, like some visible and offensive deformity of person, he will display wherever he goes ; or, if he becomes conscious of his vulgarity and aspires to correct it, months and years of effort will hardly suffice for its eradication. These consequences depend upon the teacher, for it is as easy for a child, at first, to learn right as to learn wrong pronunciation or articulation ; and how can a candidate be considered worthy of a certificate who overlooks so essential an item in the list of a teacher's qualifications ?

So if a candidate answers affirmatively to the question, whether in teaching arithmetic, he gives to his pupil, as a first lesson in this study, all those signs of multiplication, division, proportion, and of the square and cube foot, which are found at the beginning of some of our school arithmetics, he shows by his

very answer, his ignorance of one of the first and simplest rules by which a teacher should be guided ;—viz., not to teach barren signs, unaccompanied by ideas ; but to wait until in the course of advancement, the pupil comes to the subject-matter to which each sign belongs, and then to give the sign which typifies or symbolizes it.

In beginning to teach geography to young children, the lessons found at the commencement of our school books, are not the ones which should come first in order. Space and form are the elements of physical geography, as time is of history ; and a child may as well be set to studying history, who has no idea that the world he lives in is older than his grandparents, as to studying our common text books of geography before his mind has been led outward and outward into space, and has acquired definite ideas of the forms with which the surface of the earth is occupied. The localities about the schoolhouse, the roads or streets in the vicinity, with all the striking objects which characterize them, should be the subjects of the first lessons in this important branch of study. These should be minutely described and delineated upon the blackboard, before referring to any object beyond the visible horizon. An image of the brook which the child may have crossed in coming to school ; of the pond in the neighborhood on whose margin he may have sported ; of the hill, to whose summit he may have climbed, should be distinctly pictured upon the mind, to be referred to as *units of measure*, when in the course of his studies he comes to rivers and lakes and mountains, a hundred or a thousand times wider, broader or higher than any he has ever seen. Before this preliminary step is taken, it is pernicious to require a pupil to commit to memory definitions of zenith and nadir, of latitude and longitude, and those other points, lines and circles,—the mere creatures of abstraction,—which are used in elucidating the *Doctrine of the Sphere*.

In many books of geography, the natural features of the earth are treated of under the head of its civil or political divisions. The pupil, for instance, in learning the hydrography of

the Mississippi valley, takes up the subject in fragments. He begins, perhaps, with the tiers of States on the eastern or left bank of the Mississippi; and in learning what are their respective climates, soils, productions, manners, laws, religion, &c., he learns also, what particular branches or tributaries of that great river rise in, or flow through each of those States. He then takes the States on the western or right bank, in their order. Thus, though every stream belonging to the "Father of Waters," is brought under his notice; yet his knowledge of them is disconnected, he has acquired it with long intervals between his lessons, and it is incoherent and mingled with a variety of other facts; for he must have spent considerable time, and have travelled over more than a dozen States to compass it. But suppose the teacher should lead the mind of the pupil at once to the mouth of the Mississippi, and then, in imagination should soar with him to such an elevation above the surface of the earth, that the immense valley beneath could be surveyed by a single glance of the eye, bounded on the west by the grand wall of the Rocky Mountains, and on the east by that of the Alleghanies; the river itself presenting the likeness of a vast tree, its main channel forming a trunk thousands of miles in length, while its numerous tributaries represent branches of thousands of miles expanse,—all seen as one object, and therefore having coherence, and giving vividness and depth of impression;—can any one doubt that a better knowledge of the hydrography of the Mississippi valley could, in this mode, be acquired in a single day, than most of our children now possess when they leave school, after the study of years? Again, let the single fact be pointed out to a pupil, that a man may travel from Gibraltar, in a northeasterly direction, to Russia and the Frozen Ocean, and not cross a river of any considerable size, though he would pass near the fountain-heads of all the great rivers in Europe; and it will give him a clearer and more lasting impression of the course of the European rivers, of the system of mountains, and of the general face and slopes of the country, and therefore, of its climate, than would be acquired by studying the map of

Europe a month in the ordinary way. Every part of the globe admits of being viewed under these comprehensive aspects ; and it is surely within the power of the committee, by an examination of two minutes' length, to ascertain whether the candidate is familiar with these methods, or whether his practice is confined to hearing droning recitations from a book. Emphatically, is it necessary in the study of physical geography, and of the boundaries or civil divisions of States, to have constant recourse to the blackboard. In hearing a recitation in the common way, no teacher can certainly tell whether his pupil is not thinking of the text book ;—of the page, of the paragraph, of the lines and words, where a fact is stated ;—but if a pupil can delineate upon the blackboard the form of an island, a coast, or a country, the teacher then knows that the representation which comes out from the ends of his fingers, must have been copied from an image on the tables of his mind.

I say nothing here of the use of outline maps, or of the terrestrial globe, as unfortunately, so few of our schools are provided with them.

In regard to grammar, too, it is equally certain that a brief series of questions will disclose the teacher's mode of proceeding, and thus establish or set aside his claim to competency in this important department. If the teacher is conversant with no better way than to put a common text book of grammar into the hands of beginners, and to hear lessons recited by them, day after day, concerning definitions and rules, while, as yet, they are wholly ignorant of the classes of words defined, and have no conception of those relations which the rules express,—whatever other qualifications such a person may have, he, surely, has no aptness to teach grammar. The question is often asked, when, or at what age, children should begin to study grammar ? If it is to be studied in the way above described, one would be almost tempted to reply, *Never*. But, if learned in a manner conformable to the order of nature, scholars may commence its study, at almost any age. The

perceptive powers, or those faculties by which we recognize separate existences or individualities, and qualities or properties, are developed at a very early period of life. Any child six years old, if his mind is skilfully led to the exercise, will be delighted to recall and repeat the names of hundreds of things with which he is familiar,—such as the objects of sight, hearing, taste and smell, the appetites, as hunger and thirst, and the emotions, as love, hope, gratitude, &c. His attention may then be directed to the obvious fact that each one of these names stands for thousands of individual objects, as the word house for all houses, horse for all horses, color for all colors, &c. He will then be pleased with knowing how we distinguish the different individuals of these respective classes from each other, by the use of descriptive epithets, as an old or a new house, a red or a white one, a large or a small, a high or a low, a beautiful or an ugly, &c. Thus, without mentioning the names, *noun* and *adjective*, the elementary ideas of those parts of speech are distinctly formed, and perceived to be wholly different from each other. The attention of the pupil may then be turned to the actions, and motions, and states of being, of all objects animate or inanimate. He may be made to perceive that some actions are confined to the agent putting them forth, while other actions pass beyond the agent and affect other persons or things. So, in regard to one of the modifications of this last class of ideas, which so often proves a stumbling-block to beginners in grammar, viz., tense or time. There is not a child in the State, of average capacity and five years of age, who cannot understand the three great divisions of time,—past, present and future,—as well as a philosopher. These three divisions being clearly perceived, it will then be easy for him to subdivide past time into the three portions which we designate as imperfect, perfect and pluperfect, (unhappily, because the first two words, in this relation, have no analogy to their signification, when found elsewhere,) and also to subdivide the future into two parts. Now, all this not only can, but should be done, without touch or sight of a grammar book; and, if well done,

the pupil will possess an extensive knowledge of things, of qualities, of actions and of relations, to which the technical names and rules of the text book may be afterwards intelligently applied.

And, in the later stages of this study, the whole question of fitness to teach, may be determined by the inquiry, whether, on the one hand, the teaching is to consist of a senseless repetition of case, number and gender, of mood, tense and rule; or, on the other, in such an analysis, both of the language and the thought of an author, as leads out into rhetoric, as it regards the form and structure of the expressions, and into logic, as it regards the sequence and coherency of the ideas. In any thing worthy to be called grammar, both the style and sense of a writer are to be carefully investigated. The place assigned in each sentence, to its principal idea or proposition; the juxtaposition of relatives to their antecedents, and of adjuncts to their principals; the manner in which collateral and subordinate ideas are introduced, so as never to be mistaken for the principal or leading ones; the concealment, the hiding-up, as it were, of expletive, auxiliary and less significant words, instead of giving them prominence; the eligibleness of the words selected, over their synonyms; the easy transition from clause to clause, harmonizing with the gradation from thought to thought; the steady accumulation of meaning, with each additional expression, until, at last, a few words,—perhaps a single word, with epigrammatic force reveals the fulness and significance of the perfected sentence;—these, and such as these, are the main, if not almost the only points, which can be useful to the future writer or speaker; and these, therefore, are the points to which the attention of the student in grammar should be directed. It is obvious that a pupil may describe the relation and properties of each word in a sentence, and yet leave their combined force wholly untouched. The beautiful diction, the profound meaning and condensed energy of such authors as Milton, Pope and Young, whose writings are so often selected for the parsing exercises of our schools, are not brought

out and displayed,—not even a glimpse of them is revealed,—by the recitative and ding-dong of government and agreement, of gender, number and case, mood, tense and rule. So far as grammar is concerned, therefore, no person can be apt to teach, whose course of study has not led him to form an acquaintance with approved methods.

The opinion is often entertained, that mere fluency of utterance confers an ability to communicate knowledge, or aptness to teach. Some opportunity for observation, coincides with the deductions of reason, in leading me to believe that this is a mistake. In attempting to unfold a subject to one devoid of all notions respecting it, the danger of failing lies rather on the side of a too rapid, than of a too moderate enunciation. We are accustomed to refer to the quickness of thought, as one of the most striking emblems of velocity; and, in our comparisons, we speak indiscriminately of the swiftness of lightning, and of the swiftness of thought. If we are referring to our thoughts on subjects with which we have been long familiar, the illustration is appropriate and expressive; for, in such cases, the mind darts from end to end of an immense chain of associations, within an inappreciable lapse of time. But the very reverse is true when we are acquiring ideas on new and unaccustomed themes. If the thoughts of a mature and practised mind are, almost without a figure, called *winged*, because of their swiftness, those of an immature and unpractised one, may, with equal propriety, be called *unfledged*, from the slowness and unsteadiness of their motions. The common mistake may have arisen from a want of discrimination between the emotions or affections of children, and their intellectual operations. The former are quick, the latter comparatively slow. Aptness to teach, therefore, seems to require, not rapidity, but great deliberateness, in communicating instruction; and the order in which ideas are presented is indefinitely more important than the number offered in a given time.

But without glancing further, in this hasty and necessarily incomplete manner, at other tests or criteria of aptness to teach our Common School studies, it may be added that the com-

mittee, in five minutes' conversation with the candidate, can draw out his views in regard to the number of studies which, with the greatest advantage, can be simultaneously pursued; the proper intervals between alternations from one study to another; the frequency of reviews; the propriety of using keys, question-books, &c.

It seems to be universally conceded that, as scholars advance in years, they can apply their minds, for a longer period, to a specific subject. Little children are incapable of long-continued application to the same thing. Their attention flits from point to point. As their hand seizes quickly upon an object, and as quickly loosens its grasp, as their feet bound from the earth as soon as it is touched, so their minds catch single glimpses of one subject, and with the volatility of a humming-bird, fly to another. The whole organization,—mind, brain and limb,—vibrates to the pulsations of the heart, which are rapid but weak. But, with the advance of time, and the repetitions of exercise, the power of concentration strengthens. As the mind becomes more mature, it pursues its investigations longer at once, and with a speed accelerated in the ratio of the time. It seems to perceive, almost intuitively, that it would lose momentum and head-way by an interruption of the continuity of thought; and, therefore, it adheres to the same train of ideas more tenaciously and for a longer period. Yet, notwithstanding the obviousness of these principles, it is a general fact, in regard to all our schools, that the younger scholars have far less variety and change in their exercises than the older. A monotonous course is enforced upon the young mind, while it is quick and volatile, but as its power of concentrating itself upon any given subject increases, it is subjected to the dispersive influence of rapid changes. It must be a great reformation which will remedy this defect in our schools, and it is one imperatively called for.

Closely allied with the preceding topic, is that of the alternation of studies, or the time to be occupied by one study before leaving it for another. In some schools, the periods of study and of recitation succeed each other, every ten minutes; while,

in another, the study of a single branch is enforced upon the scholars for three consecutive months, which seems to give no more relief to the fatigued faculties, nor opportunity for renovating their strength by alternate periods of repose, than would be allowed to the muscles, if each pupil were compelled to stand on one leg, for the same length of time.

On the subject of reviews, the practice is not less various and contradictory. In some schools, a review of the lesson just recited, is always included in the lesson given out. In some schools, the Wednesday and Saturday of every week, are appropriated to a review of all the lessons of the two days which respectively preceded them. In others, again, the review-day comes semi-monthly or monthly; and the number of schools is not small, in which there is no review until the school term is considerably advanced, when it is commenced in earnest, and pursued to the exclusion of everything else, until the day, and for the purpose, of examination.

Again, in some schools question-books are used, and the practice grows up into a common law of the school, that the questions put by the teacher, shall be, both in number and form, precisely like those contained in the book. In other schools, the teacher's whole aim is to ascertain how much of the subject-matter of the lesson has been mastered by the pupil,—the formal questions in the book being disregarded by both parties. The difference between the minds of pupils whose lessons are studied and recited in these different methods, is that between emptiness and fulness. In some schools an arithmetical key is in constant use, by means of which the pupil always knows the number or places of figures, and the value of them, at which he is to aim; and this knowledge becomes one of the elements in calculating the process by which the problem is to be worked. In this case, arithmetic degenerates into the art of obtaining, from known data, on unknown principles, a known result, whether right or wrong; instead of being that perfect science which, proceeding from known data, on known principles, evolves the true, but before unknown result, with infallible certainty. If the answers to all the practical questions raised in

the business transactions of life, were known beforehand, few would be so simple as to go through with a formula to obtain them. But either the answer must be known from some foreign source, or the principles must be known by which it can be educed. In life, the answer will never be known beforehand; and if the principles for obtaining it are also unknown, the result will be universal error.

Perhaps the importance of no other Common School study can be made more obvious and palpable to all pupils than that of arithmetic. Almost every week, if not every day, the young arithmetician, in solving his imaginary questions, disposes of such quantities of goods as would make or ruin the fortune of a wholesale dealer; he makes calculations respecting such sums of money as but few capitalists have the disposal of; and he balances such heavy accounts between supposed merchants, as would decide the fortune of any actual merchant in Boston or New York, were the sums and quantities dealt with, real, and not fictitious. All these masses, whether of commodities, or of silver and gold, the pupil decides upon, without a cent in his pocket, or any guarantor for his solvency. Now, the beauty of the process is, that if he makes a mistake, however serious, no injustice is done to any body, nor does any pecuniary loss accrue to himself. But here he is in search of those principles, by virtue of which, as subsequent occasions to apply them may arise in the actual business of life, he can decide all questions respecting real commodities and real sums, without mistake, and therefore without loss to himself or injustice to others. Principles, then, should be the only object of the pupil's pursuit. But if arithmetic is studied, not for the purpose of mastering principles, but for the purpose of finding certain answers corresponding to those in the key, it becomes too worthless an object to satisfy the desire or stimulate the ambition of any child whose faculties have not been misled or perverted. Were the attention of the classes in arithmetic directed to the vast amounts of money, of stocks, and of merchandize, mentioned in their text books, and were they then

led to imagine the schoolhouse to be like a warehouse, an exchange or a market-place, where all these things were bought and sold and their values adjusted, and themselves the agents or owners by whom the business was transacted, the puerile ambition of finding the answer contained in the key, would be lost in a sense of reality and responsibility, and all necessity of resorting to the pernicious stimulus of emulation, or rivalry with classmates, would be superseded.

In many of the arithmetical keys, formulas are given for the solution of all the more difficult questions, so that the difficulty is cancelled as soon as it is created, and the hardest questions in appearance, are the easiest in fact. This seems about as wise as it would be, under pretence of tasking or testing the muscular strength of a child, to put a burden of great weight into his hands to be carried a certain distance, but the moment he receives it, to take up both himself and the burden, and carry him to, and set him down quietly at the goal, without his exerting a muscle. In other schools, the use of keys is prohibited. The pupil is conducted to no answer, except under the guidance of principles; and he soon comes to rely upon principles with equal implicitness and delight, by daily witnessing the fidelity with which they lead him to truth.

Now it is certain that such conflicting practices cannot all have a foundation in reason and nature. If any of them are right, others of them must be very wrong; and the children of the State are suffering under the erroneous methods. Correct opinions concerning them all, are involved in the qualification of aptness to teach; and by ascertaining the views of a candidate respecting them, the committee can relieve themselves from much uncertainty and hazard in regard to his competency.

Not a little, also, may be known of a candidate's capacity for the government of a school, by hearing even a brief expression of his views upon that subject, aided by an observation of his personal demeanor and bearing. If a teacher does not hold it to be a violation of one of his most solemn duties to indulge in expressions of contempt, in ridicule or anger towards his scholars, however stockish or contemptuous they may be, he

is destitute of one of the first desiderata in the capacity to govern. Such a teacher, indeed, may overpower and subdue a school by brute force, as a conqueror subjugates a people and holds them in bondage by the terrors of fire and sword. But such a government is tyrannical, not paternal. The young and the insane resemble each other in being creatures of impulse, rather than of reason; and the expression of wrath in a superior, either produces its likeness in them, or else it overwhelms them with a stupefying, deadening sense of fear. No lineament of anger should ever deform the face of one who has the superintendence of either class. The minds of children, especially, should be kept sacred from such desecration.

The same inference, also, must be drawn, in regard to capacity for governing a school, if the teacher has no resources for the prevention of idleness or the suppression of a mischievous or disobedient spirit, but the infliction of punishment. So, too, if he has no expedients for enkindling a love of knowledge and a zeal for improvement, among his pupils, but the low and anti-social one of rivalry,—that is, a desire to surpass one's classmates or fellow-students, for the sake of winning a prize, or of standing, conspicuous, at the head of a class, at the final examination of the school. In fine, if emulation and fear are his great motive-powers for securing proficiency and obedience, he wants capacity to govern.

The power of inflicting bodily pain is the lowest form of superiority. It is the instinctive resort of brute animals, which, having no resources in intelligence, appeal to force. It prevails most universally amongst the most savage tribes, where superiority of muscular power gives superiority of social rank, and the regal title is conceded to the strongest. But the moment a barbarian takes a single step in advance of his fellows;—the moment he can build a better canoe, or speed an arrow with a surer aim, or can prognosticate the weather, or trail an enemy, with a keener eye, he acquires a power over his tribe, independently of fear; and commands respect and precedence, without inflicting pain. And, so, through all the higher grades

of intellectual and moral development. Every new accession of spiritual power supersedes, to the same extent, the necessity of appealing to the brute part of human nature, in establishing a control over it; and, so far as any one is obliged to make this appeal, he falls short of that noble, intellectual and moral ascendancy, to which all should aspire, and which some have already attained. As civilization has advanced, the wheel of torture has been arrested, and the instruments of terror and affright have ceased to be used, as stimulants to duty or motives to obedience;—nay, the progress of civilization is measured by the extent to which, with equal efficacy, the higher motives have been substituted for the lower, in the government of men. Any person, therefore, at the present day, who is acquainted only with the lowest in the whole scale of motives,—who, in establishing his authority, begins back where the brute begins, and where the savage begins, can have no approvable capacity for the government of a school. And can the school committee, who have not made a single inquiry of the candidate respecting his views of government, and who have not sought for information respecting him from other sources;—can they give a hasty approval, after a brief examination, and then justify themselves by throwing the responsibility on the law? When, on visiting a school, they witness the inexpressible injury which is caused by the application of false principles, or by proceeding in ignorance of all principles; can they hold themselves fully exonerated from the charge of neglect, on the ground that the law requires of them an impossibility, when they have approved the candidate without seeking to ascertain his views on this momentous subject?

I would by no means be understood to express the opinion that, *in the present state of society*, punishment, and even corporal punishment, can be dispensed with, by all teachers, in all schools, and with regard to all scholars. Order is emphatically the first law of a schoolroom. Order must be preserved, because it is a prerequisite to every thing else that is desirable. If a school cannot be continued with order, it should not be

continued without it, but discontinued. After all motives of duty, of affection, of the love of knowledge and of good repute, have been faithfully tried, and tried in vain, I see not why this "strange work" may not be admitted into the human, as well as into the divine government. Nor will it do to prohibit the exercise of this power altogether, because it is sometimes abused. The remedy for abuse is not prohibition, but discretion. This, however, is certain, that when a teacher preserves order and secures progress, the minimum of punishment shows the maximum of qualifications.

I pass by the subject of emulation, and the expediency of the committees' inquiring of the candidate whether he means to employ it as one of the motive-powers of his school, with a single remark. The remark is, that throughout the State, the best and most successful teachers,—when they are not controlled by positive regulations of the committees,—are more and more generally discarding its use. Their reasons are, that the decisions founded upon it are always difficult and often unjust; that it tends to withdraw the mind from a love of knowledge for its own sake, to the desire of a conspicuous position and of ostentatious displays; that knowledge acquired under this stimulus, will be less thorough and less permanent than if pursued and obtained for the intrinsic pleasure which its acquisition for its own sake, always imparts; that, after a sufficient time has elapsed to form comparisons and to foresee the chances of success, the number of competitors is reduced to a few, the incentive ceasing, through hopelessness to operate on the many; that its tendency is to engender alienation, uncharitableness and envy among rivals; and, finally, that under the system of emulation as practised in our schools, those unhallowed passions of cupidity and of ambition will be nursed into strength, which, in after-life, will corrupt the mercantile community with the spirit of speculation and fraud, and desolate the political one with the tempests of party strife. To this, I know it may be said in reply, that the instinct or propensity of emulation is implanted in us by nature, and therefore to be cultivated like

any other natural endowment. So, also, are the instincts of anger, and pride, and avarice, and war, and of other selfish or sensual passions, implanted in us by nature. One answer applies equally to them all. From some cause, they are too strong already. They do not need inflaming, but repression. They are central fires burning beneath our feet, and already bursting up around us, and threatening to consume the most sacred and valued institutions of the land; and, like the surface beneath which a volcano labors, it will require a century for them to cool down to a habitable temperature, even if no new fuel adds rage to their flames. The Christian virtues are found to have an efficacy vastly superior, as motives to exertion; and they are infinitely more worthy to be employed, though we should only take into the account the highest welfare of children, in regard to their mortal and worldly relations.

But there is one inquiry which the committee may, in all cases, make of the candidate; and a negative answer to which, especially with regard to those who have had little or no experience, would go very far towards deciding the general question of competency. This inquiry is, whether the candidate has ever sought to obtain a specific preparation, either by attending a course of instruction under some competent master, or by carefully studying the best works on the subject, and by acquainting himself with the modes and processes adopted by the best teachers. Such opportunities now exist, at those light-spreading institutions, the Normal Schools. If a thorough course of instruction at these is too expensive, or requires too much time, there are numerous works on the subject of education, at once easily accessible and invaluable, which any person worthy to be intrusted with the interests of a school, can find, *or make*, an opportunity to read. 'The Teacher,' by the Rev. Jacob Abbott; 'Palmer's Prize Essay, or the Teacher's Manual;' 'The Teacher Taught,' by Rev. Emerson Davis; Miss Edgeworth's 'Practical Education;' 'Progressive Education,' a translation from the French of Madame Neckar de Saussure; The works of Pestalozzi, Wyse, Simpson, Wilderspin, Stow,

and others, together with the Lectures of the American Institute of Instruction, and the educational periodicals which, for the last few years, have been published, both in Europe and in this country;—all these instructive works leave a candidate wholly without excuse for his neglect, if without any preparation by training or study, he aspires to a station, where he will, to no inconsiderable extent, reproduce and multiply by fifties and by hundreds, his own style of manners, modes of thought, and aspects of moral feeling. Indeed, after all the light which has now been spread abroad upon this subject, the single fact, that a person proposes to assume a station where he will impart influences to the minds of the young which will abide with them and constitute a part of their being and character while life lasts, without having first most anxiously and perseveringly sought to fit himself for the momentous duty, is sufficient to decide the question of *moral character*! For, how can any one sustain a claim to justice, benevolence, or any other element of morality, who offers to render a service for which he is consciously incompetent; or, if not conscious of his incompetence, the case is aggravated, because such a fact would argue the lowest state of ignorance,—that ignorance, namely, which does not know that there is any thing to be learned.

Suppose a person, merely because he might be out of employment, or because, for any other reason of health or ease, he should prefer in-door to out-door occupation, should establish himself in the business of an apothecary, and, owing to his utter ignorance of the *Materia Medica*, the first prescription he should fill, should cause instantaneous death. Standing in the midst of a bereaved family, surrounded, perhaps, by a group of orphan children, would it be any exculpation for him to say, “I knew no better”? The answer is, it was his duty to know better, or to abstain from the business; and the spirit of the commandment, “thou shalt not kill,” applies to him in all its penal force; but no more fully than the injunction to “train up a child in the way he should go,” attaches to every one who assumes the guardianship of children. An

inextinguishable desire to promote the greatest good of others, is one of the most valuable qualifications in a teacher ; and no one, over whose actions this desire is enthroned, can stifle or appease the upbraidings of conscience, under the conviction that he is doing children harm, or that he is not doing them the greatest practicable amount of good. To prepare himself for this duty, any person who is worthy to fill the sacred office of teacher, will study and meditate ; he will seek information from all sources, and daily replenish and fortify his mind with the most elevating and sustaining motives.

It is one of the offices of a teacher to provide aliment for the mind, just as the parent who is attentive to the natural wants of his children, provides aliment for the body. There is the closest analogy between these relations. What is given by either will be assimilated, by the mysterious processes of nature, and become a part of the child's system, bodily or mental. If the food, furnished by the natural parent be sufficient and nourishing, and supplied in accordance with the laws of health, then the whole corporeal frame will thrive, and grow in stature and might ; but, on the other hand, if it be scanty or unhealthful, then emaciation and debility of the physical system will betray the parental improvidence. And, so of the mental powers ;—if nourished by that knowledge, which is their appropriate food, if stimulated to a healthful activity, and allowed their due alternations of exercise and rest,—these higher powers will expand with a rapidity, and glow with an intense and joyous vitality, which has no parallel in the organic or unintelligent world ;—and, if guided by right affections, they will become, in their maturity, not only the admiration, but the blessing of mankind. But, on the other hand, if these supplies, through the forming years of childhood, are meager, or distasteful, or noxious, then will the season of manhood come on, unaccompanied either by the capacity or the inclination to perform the duties that will await it. It is not, therefore, in the power of a finite being adequately to conceive the difference between two teachers, one of whom teaches well, and imparts knowl-

edge bountifully, while the other mingles such errors with his instructions, that his best recommendation consists in his imparting so little. The candidate for a school comes before the committee, asking permission to fill a stewardship, where his duty will be to distribute a rich repast of knowledge to the youth who may assemble around him, and who are hungering and thirsting for his bounty. And hence, the unimaginable difference between one who is able to give generously and to give constantly, and whose supplies are never exhausted, and another, who, from his indigence, doles out only crumbs and drops, and even then, is soon empty and dry. And what right has any one to expect fulness of resources for every emergency, and skill to impart to all, according to their wants, and in due season, if he has not replenished his mind by reading, nor matured his judgment by contemplation, nor sought instruction from the masters of the art? Knowledge and capacity, of this high nature, come not from instinct nor from intuition. Labor, and study, and toil, and an imitation of the best masters, alone have the prerogative of conferring them.

There is a teacher in this State, who, although he has labored constantly in his profession for thirty years, does not, even now, hear a recitation, without first going carefully over the lesson,—not so much to revise principles which must already be familiar to him, as to pre-adapt his questions and explanations to the different attainments and capacities of his pupils. When out of school, he spends many hours daily, in preparing for its exercises, and in devising the wisest means for correcting, by intellectual and moral influences, any remissness or waywardness in individual scholars. In these hours of study and contemplation, he enkindles in his own spirit that fervency of Christian love, and digests those plans of practical wisdom, by virtue of which, without ever resorting to corporal punishment or emulation, or appealing to any low motive whatever, he secures the greatest extent of intellectual proficiency, and fuses and remoulds the most refractory dispositions. The zeal and progress of the pupils in this school, cor-

respond with the assiduity and conscientiousness of its teacher. What parent worthy of the name, would not submit to any sacrifice to secure such a teacher for his children, rather than to employ one who, after spending a long summer on a farm, or in a shop, or in trafficking in small goods, from town to town, suddenly suspends his accustomed occupation, and, taking a small bundle of books under his arm, with a ferule conspicuously displayed on its outside, enters the schoolroom, without revising a lesson he is to teach, or bestowing a thought upon the principles by which he is to govern, but rashly trusting to extemporaneous light and inspiration for his guidance, in all cases of doubt or difficulty? Fertilizing and purifying influences are richly showered down, by the one, fulfilling the promise of a most luxuriant growth; while the other, not only destroys the hope of a harvest, but impoverishes the very soil on which it should have flourished.

During the last year, I have repeatedly visited schools, in towns where the plan of gradation has been adopted, and, on comparing pupils who are now in their fourth school year, under one instructor, with those who followed them, and are now in their second school year, under another, I have found the latter, not only in orderly habits, in pleasing manners, and in lively attention, but, in the amount of their literary attainments, actually surpassing the former, though under instruction less than half the time. And were it possible, by any mental chemistry, to neutralize or dissipate all the knowledge acquired by the younger department, still leaving them in possession of their habits of attention and application, they would soon overtake and again outstrip their seniors. No wealth which can be bequeathed to a child, can be so valuable as the fortune of attending such a school as the latter; and the great difference for the present,—the still greater difference for the future, which will result from these ennobling and enriching, or from those degrading and pauperizing influences, is resolvable into a single fact,—a difference in the qualifications of teachers.

I have dwelt thus long upon this subject, in the hope of conveying some idea, however inadequate, of the vast distance that lies between a good and a poor teacher,—how wide asunder they are ;—and of showing that the law is not so unreasonable as has sometimes been supposed, since tests do exist, to which the committees can appeal, for the purpose of discriminating one class from the other.

The last reports of the committees exhibit proofs that the contrasts between teachers, are beginning to be more justly appreciated. And hence it is proper that all persons who are now aspiring to this responsible station, should know that if, in past times, ignorance and deficiency have been winked at, the keen and wide-opened eye of the public is now turning upon them, and exposure must follow delinquency.

In many towns the committees have established the practice of appointing a particular day and place, or where the number of districts is large, two or more days and places, for the examination of candidates for the summer and winter terms respectively. In one instance, certainly, if not in more, a vote has been passed by the town, that if the candidates do not appear at the appointed time, but make an extra meeting of the committee necessary, they shall themselves defray the expense of the extra session.

There is great advantage, as well as economy, in having all the candidates for the season examined at the same, and at an assigned time. All the members of the committee are more likely to assemble. The examination will be more faithful and thorough. After the examination is closed, an opportunity will be afforded to the committee, to make extended remarks, or even to deliver an informal address, on any of the various topics which the condition of the schools, or the appearance of the candidates, as disclosed on the occasion, may render most eligible. Nor is it unworthy of remark that this assembling of the teachers will furnish an opportunity to them for the commencement of a friendly acquaintance, and for making arrangements for weekly or semi-monthly meetings to be held by themselves

during their ensuing term. Many teachers have gratefully spoken of the light and encouragement which these stated interviews have shed upon a path, otherwise dark and solitary.

I may remark in passing, that such meetings need not be confined exclusively to teachers. The town committee, the prudential committees,—any one, indeed, who can contribute to the interest or the usefulness of the occasion, should be welcomed. But it may not be superfluous to add the caution that, if the assembly should become promiscuous in regard to its members, it should not be so in regard to its objects, but its discussions should always have a direct relation to the science or the art, the necessity or the utility of Common School education.

In passing in review the leading facts communicated by the committees' reports, there is one of a painful kind, though fortunately of limited extent, which I do not feel at liberty to omit; because, in an impartial survey of our school system, whatever is adverse to its beneficent and comprehensive operation should be noticed, not less faithfully than that which is propitious.

In my Report of last year, I referred to the harmony of opinion on an important subject, which, unmarred by a single discordant note, pervaded the reports of the committees from all parts of the State. According to that opinion, our schools are an institution to be sustained at the common expense of all the citizens, for the equal benefit of all their children; and they are, therefore, to be kept free from those controverted questions, whether political or theological, on which, unhappily, wide diversities of opinion or belief now prevail,—and must, indeed, continue to prevail until the happy day shall come when all men shall "see eye to eye." The statement which published the fact of this universal harmony of sentiment respecting the schools, amidst wide differences of opinion on other subjects, has been hailed with joy by the best friends of mankind, and quoted with warm commendation, in leading newspapers and periodicals of adverse parties, both in our sister States and in foreign countries. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has

been congratulated on having reached that point in civilization, where good men of all parties can coöperate for the promotion of a common object of acknowledged value, notwithstanding a want of unanimity on other subjects.

In repeating the statement, this year, I am compelled to make an exception in regard to the two small Shaker families or communities, in the towns of Shirley and Harvard. It appears by the reports of the committees of those towns, that these two villages withdrew themselves, during the last year, from the provisions of the general school law. The first named society refused to allow its teacher to be examined, or its school to be visited by the town's committee. I believe these to have been the first instances in the State, where an organized school district has assumed the right of absolving itself, on such grounds, from the supremacy of the law; and the course of proceeding seems to have been correctly described in one of the reports, as a "nullification" of the school law.

If such a case must arise, it seems fortunate that it has occurred amongst a sect, where the authority of numbers is not added to the weight of example. It is fortunate, too, that it has occurred in a place, where all the residents upon the territory embrace one faith, and where, therefore, the children of parents who hold other views, are not involved in the consequences of this violation of the law. Indeed, if others living within the same district, had been deprived by this course of their school privileges, we ought in charity to suppose that a measure so obviously unjust as well as illegal,—as in that case it would be,—would never have been adopted. If a difference of opinion, on collateral subjects, were to lead to secession, and to exclusive educational establishments among us, it is obvious that all the multiplication of power which is now derived from union and concert of action, would be lost; and the burden of supporting public and free schools which is now so easily borne by the united strength of society, would become so heavy as to crush the individual, and therefore, in the end, would cease to be assumed. Our only alternative, then, is mutual tolera-

tion, or the abandonment of the free school system, and with it, all hopes of a general education of the people. At first, indeed, a few classes whose views should most nearly resemble each other, might form an alliance against opponents separated from them by a broad line of distinction ; but as soon as the common enemy should be overcome, intestine dissensions would succeed to foreign hostilities. It is a remark borne out by the concurrent testimony of all history, that when conflicting parties unite against a common foe, a conquest is no sooner achieved than the seat of the war is transferred to their own territory. Victory abroad is followed not by peace, but by strife, at home. It is also a remark which wants little of being universally true, that when disunion breaks out among members of the same fraternity, the bitterness of the feud increases, as the difference between the combatants becomes less. It can never be expected, therefore, that harmony amongst the victorious allies, will be one of the rewards of triumph. Apply these conclusions from universal history and experience, to our school system, and it becomes obvious that, if once the principle of secession be admitted, because of differences in religious opinion, all hope of sustaining the system itself, must be abandoned as fallacious. Nor does alienation spring from doctrinal differences only. The hostility between political parties is waged as earnestly as that between religious. Indeed the contest about political men and measures, occupies, at present, far more of the public mind than the contest for different modes of faith ;—and, numerous as polemical combatants and presses are, on subjects pertaining to the church, the combatants and presses on matters pertaining to the State, are a hundred to one. But supposing each religious and each political party to withdraw from its opponents, and establish its own schools, not one half of the latent elements of repulsion would have been developed. No cause, at the present day, draws broader lines of demarcation between citizens, neighborhoods and parishes, than that of Abolition ;—whether abolition in the generic sense, or those specific parties into which the original cause is now di-

vided. The waters of bitterness which have been raised by the Temperance movements, also, have not yet subsided ; and, catching the general spirit of discord, even the champions of Peace and Non-Resistance might insist upon exclusive institutions for themselves, at least for purposes of self-defence, if not of aggressive proselytism.

It must be apparent to all, that, before such a disastrous movement had half reached its consummation, our school system,—alike the glory of the past, and the hope of the future, would be broken into fragments. In all our country towns, where reside, not only the numerical majority, but the strength of the State, a barrier of separation, high and thick as the Chinese wall, would be erected around every house, to save it from the contact and contamination of its neighbors ;—nay, in many cases, several such walls must run through the same house, to protect members of the same family from the contagion of each other's heresy. Under such a disastrous and fatal course of policy, all of great and good which has been done for us by our venerated ancestors, through the instrumentality of our schools, would be speedily obliterated. Civilization would counter-march, retracing its steps far more rapidly than it had ever advanced ; and, amid the impulses of human selfishness, and the rancor of spiritual pride, the heaven-descended precept, to "love one another," would practically pass into oblivion. The broadest and grandest social distinction which exists between our own times and the dark ages, consists in this,—that more persons, whose private interests or opinions conflict, can so far tolerate each other, as to unite their efforts and their resources, to promote the common objects of philanthropy. And, hence, it follows, that, whoever would instigate desertion, or withdraw resources, from the common cause, is laboring, either ignorantly or wilfully, to shroud the land in the darkness of the middle ages, and to reconstruct those oppressive institutions, of former times, from which our fathers achieved the deliverance of this country.

We need look no further than to a neighboring city, in a

border State, to see the disastrous consequences of implicating the great and universal interests of education, with those of particular religious sects. For nearly two years, the city of New York has been intensely agitated, by a question between Catholics and Protestants, respecting the distribution of the school fund ; and, so comprehensive have now become the widening circles of the controversy, as to threaten to engulf the whole State in its vortex. We are not called upon to intimate an opinion, as to the merits of the respective parties to that unhappy controversy, but it would be blindness and fatuity in us, not to draw a practical moral, from so instructive a lesson.

In Great Britain, too, the progress of National Education has been arrested, and all the late exertions of its pure and powerful and enlightened friends, have been paralyzed, because the predominating sect in that kingdom withholds its assent to any system whose religious influences it cannot control ; while the different classes of dissenters, although willing to concede an equality of influence to their opponents, resist their monopoly of the whole.

Are not facts and considerations, like these, enough to admonish us, that, however much we may respect the two Shaker communities, in the towns of Shirley and Harvard, there is nothing, either in the motive which originated their "nullification" of the school law, or in any of the consequences to which such "nullification" tends, which should lead any party in the Commonwealth to acknowledge itself their imitator, by copying their example?

INEQUALITY IN THE MEANS OF EDUCATION.

The inequality in the means of education possessed by the children in the different towns and sections of the State, is a subject of great moment, and one not treated of in any former Report. A comparison of the statistical returns for the last year, has developed facts not heretofore conceived of by the best informed friends of the cause.

Much has been, and much still continues to be, both said and written respecting that equality in the laws, and equality under the laws, which constitutes the distinctive feature of a Republican government. By abolishing the right of primogeniture, and entails, by the extension of the elective franchise, and in other ways, much has been done towards realizing the two grand conceptions of the founders of our government, viz., that political advantages should be equal, and then, that celebrity or obscurity, wealth or poverty, should depend on individual merit. But the most influential and decisive measure for equalizing the original opportunities of men, that is, equality in the means of education, has not been adopted. In this respect, therefore, the most striking and painful disparities now exist. One source of this difference, indeed, is to be found in the almost unlimited freedom of action exercised by the different towns in regard to their liberality or parsimony, in appropriating money for the support of schools, and their fidelity or remissness in the supervision of this great trust. In this respect, the towns resemble individuals. One parent will make all sacrifices, he will economize in his pleasures, dress, shelter, and even in his food, to save the means of educating his children; while another,—perhaps his nearest neighbor,—will sell the services of his children for a few pence a day, through the whole year, that he may hoard their earnings, or spend them in dissipation. The towns have been left, substantially, to the exercise of the same freewill. It is true that the law, from time to time, has imposed certain obligations upon them; but these obligations they have generally obeyed or neglected, at their option. Indictments against them for non-observance of the law, have been very few, though their omissions to obey it, have been many. The judicial records of the State will show a hundred prosecutions against towns, for the defective condition of their roads or bridges, for one complaint on account of omissions or transgressions of the school laws. Some towns, through the influence of a few public-spirited and enlightened individuals, have not only observed, but gone far beyond the requisitions of

the law ; while in other towns, where a few men of an opposite character have gained a preponderating influence, the schools have fallen far below its minimum requirements. On a broad survey of the State, and an inquiry into the causes which have led to the superior intelligence and respectability of some towns, as compared with others, it will almost uniformly be discovered, that the foundations of their prosperity were laid by a few individuals,—in some cases by a single individual,—in elevating the condition of their Common Schools.

Under these different circumstances, the most striking inequalities have grown up. According to the Graduated Tables inserted at the end of the school abstract, it appears that, in regard to the amount of money appropriated for the support of schools, the difference between the foremost and the hindmost towns in the State, is more than *seven to one!*

There were five towns which appropriated, for the last year, more than five dollars for the education of each child within their limits, between the ages of 4 and 16 years.

11 other towns appropriated more than \$4 for each child within the same years.

28	"	"	"	3	"
123	"	"	"	2	"
139	"	"	"	1	"
1	"	"	less than	1	"

The average of appropriations for the whole State, was two dollars and seventy-one cents, for each child between the above-mentioned ages. No town, in the counties of Berkshire or Barnstable, came up to the average of the State, and in the county of Bristol, only one town, (New Bedford,) equalled it.

If any one will take a map of the Commonwealth, on which the several towns are delineated, and, with a pencil, enter the amount appropriated by each for the support of schools, he will be astonished at the difference between towns situated in the vicinity of each other ; and, oftentimes, at that between contiguous towns. Let the county tables be referred to, and it will be seen that towns standing at or near the head of the

column, and those, which could stand at the head only on condition that the order of precedence should be reversed, are towns which, geographically, lie side by side, or in the near vicinity of each other, and in regard to whose natural resources, or eligibility of location, there is but little difference. In taking the single step which carries us across the ideal line separating one town from another, we pass through an immense moral distance. We pass, as it were, from the fertility of the tropical zone to the sterility of the frozen, without any inter-medial temperate. It is a common device of geographers, for illustrating the different degrees of civilization or barbarism existing in different parts of the globe, to variegate the surface of a map with different colors and shades, from the whiteness which represents the furthest advances in civilization and Christianity, to the blackness denoting the lowest stages of barbarism. A similar map has been prepared, representing the educational differences between the different departments in the kingdom of France. A map of the different towns of Massachusetts, drawn and colored after such a model, would exhibit edifying, though humiliating contrasts. It would show that, during the last half century, the most efficient cause of social inequality has been left to grow up amongst us unobserved ; and it would furnish data for the prediction, to a great extent, of the future fortunes of the rising generation, in the respective towns. If all that has been said by the wise and good men of past times, respecting the efficiency of our Common Schools to fit children for the high and various relationships of life, be not a delusion, then, the most instructive lessons concerning the future may be drawn from a comparison of present educational conditions.

No other fact has ever exhibited so fully the extent of obligation which some towns are under to a few individuals, who have had the forecast and the energy, in the midst of difficulties and opposition, to sustain their schools. I have met many individuals, who, having failed to obtain any improvement in the means of education in their respective places of residence,

have removed to towns whose schools were good, believing the sacrifice of a hundred, or even of several hundred dollars, to be nothing, in comparison with the value of the school privileges secured for their children by such removal. Still more frequently, when other circumstances have rendered a change of domicile expedient, has this principle of selection governed in choosing a residence. I doubt not there are towns, where parsimonious considerations relative to the schools have obtained the ascendancy, which have actually lost more, in dollars and cents, by a reduction of taxable property and polls, than, in their shortsightedness, they supposed they had gained by their scanty appropriations, besides inflicting a sort of banishment upon some of their most worthy and estimable citizens.

It seems necessary here, to make a remark in explanation of the reasons for taking the number of children between the ages of 4 and 16 years, as the basis of computation in preparing the Graduated Tables. It may be suggested, that the estimate should be based upon the population or valuation of the respective towns, rather than upon the census of children. My answer is, that the school money is not raised for the population at large, but for the specific purpose of educating the youth; and the youth need the same amount of education, on their own account,—the welfare of the Republic, also, requires that they should be educated, up to a certain point,—wholly irrespective of the number of adults there may chance to be residing within the same territorial limits. So, in regard to valuation. The aggregate wealth of the town, whether great or small, as compared with that of other towns, has no bearing upon the question,—what amount of education ought the children to receive, both on account of their own and of the public welfare. Or, if this circumstance has any bearing, it only shows that the poorer a town may be, the better Common School education should its children receive, as the surest means of laying the foundation-stones of its future pecuniary prosperity. That a town has but little property, is the last reason to urge, why it should have but little intelligence, little refinement and

little moral culture. Each town in the Commonwealth, however comparatively poor, has abundant means for this purpose. The appropriations for schools, taking the whole State together, and, of course, including all the most liberal towns in the calculation, amounts to but one mill and two thirds of a mill on the dollar. Hence, it is obvious that where a town alleges poverty as an excuse for the smallness of its appropriations, it must be understood to be, not poverty of the purse, but of the spirit. The town of Milton, which has the honor of standing at the head of the State, in regard to the liberality of its appropriations for the schools, levied a tax of only about three mills on the dollar, or three thousandths of its existing property, for this noble purpose. Surely, there is not a town in the State which cannot grant three parts in a thousand of its wealth for such an object, and never feel it but in a requital of manifold blessings.

Some further idea may be formed of the general feeling prevalent in different towns on the subject of appropriations for schools, from the fact that, in some towns it has been the practice for several years, for the school committee to report to the town what sum will be wanted for the ensuing year,—upon which the town votes the appropriation according to the estimate submitted. In one town, the prudential committees of the districts transmit an estimate to the town's committee of the sums deemed necessary for their respective districts,—the aggregate of these sums is made the basis of the superintending committee's report to the town, and this report, in like manner, has been uniformly accepted. In some other towns, the committee expend whatever sum they deem necessary for the support of the schools;—at the close of the year, they report the amount expended, and this amount is at once covered by an appropriation in gross. These are specimens of the liberal spirit which already prevails in a considerable number of towns. On the other hand, there is an equal number of towns, the scantiness of whose appropriations rank them among the lowest in the State, where the rumor of an intention to increase the

school tax brings to the polls a greater number of voters, adverse to the measure, than any other municipal question would call out.

But the amount of appropriation made by the towns, although it is one of the most obvious and palpable tests of the interest which they feel in the education of their children, is yet but one among many. The reasonable presumption is, that a town which makes liberal grants, will exercise wisdom and vigilance in expending the money it has raised. But this is not necessarily so; and hence the truth should be constantly kept before the public mind, that no amount of appropriations, though it should rise to the point of extravagance or prodigality, can be a substitute for vigilant inspection by the committee, and a pervading interest on the part of parents and guardians. It may happen then, that a small appropriation wisely expended, will be productive of as much good, as a much larger one, under a lax supervision, or wasted upon incompetent teachers. On a survey of the State, the contrasts between towns in these particulars will be found as striking, as in regard to the amount of money they grant. And, unfortunately,—the fact having but few exceptions,—the towns which raise least money, exhibit least care for its judicious expenditure; and thus, instead of restoring the equality between themselves and others, render wider the gulf of separation. A few facts from authentic sources of information, will present these contrasts in their true light. In some towns, the committees have been paid for their services more than the sum fixed by law; in others, their bills have been arbitrarily cut down without reference to the legal allowance, or the time and money expended in the performance of their duties. In some towns, where the committee have made only the most moderate charge,—one far below the legal rate,—they have been rebuked, by being superseded in their office the ensuing year. In several towns, the inhabitants assembled in town meeting, after listening attentively to the annual report of the town's committee, have remained to hear selections read from the reports communicated

to the Legislature by the Board of Education. In thirty-three towns, the reports of the committees have been printed for general circulation ; but in other towns, there has been a refusal by vote, to allow even the reading of the committee's report in open town meeting, as required by law. In some towns, where an educational convention was to be held in the county, the teachers have not only been allowed to dismiss their schools for the purpose of attending it, but they have been furnished with horses and carriages to carry them to the meeting, at the town's expense ; in others, the committees have refused to allow the teachers to dismiss their schools for the purpose of attending such meeting,—even at their own expense. In one town, a teacher's library has been provided, the books of which are loaned to the teachers of the schools, after the manner of a circulating library, except that the loan is gratuitous ; and in some others, a copy of the Common School Journal is furnished to each teacher at the public expense ; in other towns, the teachers are not only unsupplied with books or other means of self-improvement, but they are obliged to furnish books for many of their scholars at their own expense, or submit to all the evils of an idle school.

This contrast might be pursued much further. The materials are abundant. Especially would it be instructive to enter into an extended comparison of different counties and towns, in regard to the ratio which the appropriations for Public Schools bear to the expenditure for private. Here it might be demonstrated that where the appropriations for Public Schools are liberal, and the interest in them strong, the education of the whole people is improved in quality and increased in quantity, while the aggregate of expense is diminished. In the adjoining counties of Middlesex and Essex, for instance, the amount expended in each, for education, in schools below the grade of academies, was last year as follows :

In Middlesex,	.	.	.	.	.	.	\$102,376 34
In Essex,	.	.	.	.	.	.	101,132 51
Difference,	.	.	.	.	.	.	<hr/>\$1,243 83

But the portions of these sums expended for Public, and for private schools, were as follows :—

In Middlesex, for education in the Public Schools,	\$81,390 60
In Essex, " " " "	56,948 60
Difference,	\$24,442 00

In Middlesex for education in the private schools,	\$20,985 74
In Essex, " " " "	44,183 91
Difference,	\$23,198 17

The grant of the city of Lowell for Public Schools, last year, was between \$16,000 and \$17,000, or almost a dollar for every inhabitant belonging to the city,—the consequence of which was that the whole expense of private schools was reduced to \$1,500. In Northampton, the grant for the Public Schools was \$4,000, or considerably more than one dollar for each inhabitant in the town, while the whole expense for private schools was but \$100. Contrasts to these cases, where small grants for Public Schools have drawn after them the consequences of great expense for private, are so numerous, that a selection from among them would be invidious.

For the present, the general remark must suffice,—a remark which, after five circuits made through all parts of the State, after a perusal and careful examination of every Return and Report made by the school committees, and after extensive correspondence and frequent interviews with the friends of education, I feel not wholly incompetent to make,—that, as a general fact, the great work of enlightening the intellect and cultivating the manners and morals of the rising generation, is going forward most rapidly and successfully in those towns whose appropriations are most generous ; while, on the other hand, a non-compliance with the requisitions of the law, in employing unapproved teachers, in diverting school moneys to illegal purposes, in resisting a uniformity of books, and in the manifesta-

tion of indifference or hostility towards the measures recently adopted for the improvement of the schools, have most commonly been found in those towns whose appropriations look rather to the question, how little money will suffice to escape from penalty or forfeiture, than how much, through the alchemy of this institution, can be transmuted into knowledge and wisdom and virtue.

Here, then, it is obvious, are grounds of wide and permanent distinction, among the rising generation, as it happens to be their good or ill fortune to belong to one place or to another. As one State, where education is neglected and disdained, falls, in its wealth, in its social standing, and in the number of its distinguished men, below another State, where this great interest is fostered and exalted ; so must some of our own towns fall below others, in all the elements of prosperity, and respectability, and honor. This, however, is a distinction which does not call upon the less favored portions of the community to curtail the privileges of the more favored, but to strive honorably to elevate themselves to a level with their fellows. It calls upon the more favored, also, by motives which should be all-powerful, to lend a helping-hand,—to practise upon those political principles which regard all men as equals, and upon those Christian principles which regard all men as brethren, in elevating their inferiors to the height of their own standard. All other means ever devised by which to approximate the idea of a Republican government, are insignificant when compared with the possession of equal educational privileges. Sumptuary laws for the rich, forced elevation of prices for labor, or a limitation of its hours with the same compensation, statutory valuations for articles of consumption, are all nugatory, while vast differences in the cultivation and training of the powers of body and mind, are constantly sending forth men, of corresponding differences in health, vigor, sagacity, forecast, prudence and wisdom. The government which should attempt to enforce an equality of external circumstances among men, while it permitted these educational inequalities to exist, would

have daily and hourly occasion for the renewal of its work ; for the officers who should execute its Procrustean edicts would not pass out of sight, before the frugal would begin to save, the prodigal to squander, and the idle to sell his ill-gotten share to the industrious,—before, in fine, the educated would leave the ignorant below them. But, if equal opportunities of improvement are offered to all, the responsibility of using or neglecting them, may justly be cast upon each individual. Society does not exhibit a more instructive or salutary lesson, than those inequalities of actual condition which result from an unequal use of equal opportunities.

It was in the hope of seeing the opportunities of education more equally diffused, that I suggested, in a former report, the expediency of encouraging the purchase of a Common School library, for each school district, by the State's granting a small bonus or gratuity for the purpose. As I there intimated, the poorer and more sparsely populated districts will not be likely to obtain this indispensable auxiliary to a good school, without assistance from the government. So far, the result verifies the prediction. There have now been sold in the State, of the library prepared under the superintendence of the Board of Education, about three hundred sets ; and, as a general fact, these have been purchased by the more wealthy and populous districts. A few districts, however, form a gratifying exception to this statement ; for, though small in numbers, and of moderate wealth, these disadvantages have been counterbalanced by zeal and public spirit, in their members. The number of Public Schools in the State, last year, was three thousand one hundred and three, so that there are now not less than twenty-eight hundred of our Public Schools destitute of a school library.

In 1839, when an investigation was made respecting the public libraries in the State, it was found that there were more than one hundred towns, (one-third part of the whole number in the State,) which had no town, social, or district school library ; and, allowing every proprietor or share-holder in

these kinds of public libraries to represent four individuals, the number of persons having a right of access to them would be but about one hundred thousand,—leaving more than six hundred thousand of our population destitute of such a privilege. A good library, in every school district in the State, would prove one of the most efficient instruments of modern civilization.

I am aware that it may be, as it has been, alleged, as an argument against the State's offering any bounty, even for the promotion of so great an object, that, if any district or town will forego this important means of self-improvement, while its neighbors eagerly seize and enjoy it, it is the affair of such district or town alone;—that they do but suffer the consequences of their own neglect, and their loss is only a just retribution for their delinquency. But this is a most incorrect representation of the case. It is the parents, who are neglectful of this great interest, but it is the children who suffer. The punishment overshoots the offender, and falls upon the innocent; for it is one generation that is guilty, and another on whom the penalty is visited. Hence, the case forms an obvious exception to the common rule, that justice must not be turned aside from its course, through commiseration for the offender.

Having now established, beyond the possibility of denial or doubt, the extraordinary and heretofore unrecognized inequalities existing between different towns in the Commonwealth, as it respects the educational advantages they bestow upon their children, the natural course of the argument would lead, at once, to an exposition or development of the consequences which must grow out of this wide departure, on each hand, from a common standard. To follow out the premises here established, to their legitimate conclusions, it should be shown what effect these different educational advantages will produce upon

- 1 The Worldly Fortunes,
- 2 The Health and Length of Life,
- 3 The Manners and Tastes, and
- 4 The Intellectual and Moral Character,

of the rising generation. This could be easily done, for the declination of the sun towards the southern tropic, is not more certainly followed by winter, with all its blankness and sterility; nor does the ascension of that luminary towards our own part of the heavens, more certainly bring on summer, with all its beauty and abundance, than does the want or the enjoyment of education degrade or elevate the condition of a people. But such an undertaking would be incompatible with the limits of a document like this. The most that can be ventured upon, is a brief reference to a single branch of the manifold subject.

For this end, I will occupy the short space which propriety allows to me, in concluding this report, by showing the effect of education upon *the Worldly Fortunes or Estates* of men,—its influence upon property, upon human comfort and competence, upon the outward, visible, material interests or well-being of individuals and communities.

This view, so far from being the highest which can be taken of the beneficent influences of education, may, perhaps, be justly regarded as the lowest. But it is a palpable view. It presents an aspect of the subject susceptible of being made intelligible to all; and, therefore, it will meet the case of thousands, who are now indifferent about the education of their offspring, because they foresee no reimbursement in kind,—no return in money, or in money's worth, for money expended. The coöperation of this numerous class is indispensable, in order to carry out the system; and if they can be induced to educate their children, even from inferior motives, the children, when educated, will feel its higher and nobler affinities.

So, too, in regard to towns. If it can be proved that the aggregate wealth of a town will be increased just in proportion to the increase of its appropriations for schools, the opponents of such a measure will be silenced. The tax for this purpose, which they now look upon as a burden, they will then regard as a profitable investment. Let it be shown that the money which is now clung to by the parent, in the hope of increasing his children's legacies, some six or ten per cent., can be so invested

as to double their patrimony, and the blind instinct of parental love, which now, by voice and vote, opposes such outlay, will become an advocate for the most generous endowments. When the money expended for education shall be viewed in its true character, as seed-grain sown in a soil which is itself enriched by yielding, then the most parsimonious will not stint the sowing, lest the harvest, also, should be stinted, and, thereby, thirty, sixty, or a hundred fold, should be lost to the garnerers.

I am the more induced to take this view of the subject, because the advocates and eulogists of education have, rarely if ever, descended to so humble a duty as to demonstrate its pecuniary value, both to individuals and to society. They have expended their strength in portraying its loftier attributes, its gladdening, refining, humanizing tendencies. They have not deigned to show how it can raise more abundant harvests, and multiply the conveniences of domestic life; how it can build, transport, manufacture, mine, navigate, fortify; how, in fine, a single new idea is often worth more to an individual than a hundred workmen,—and to a nation, than the addition of provinces to its territory. I have novel and striking evidence to prove that education is convertible into houses and lands, as well as into power and virtue.

Although, therefore, this utilitarian view of education, as it may be called, which regards it as the dispenser of private competence, and the promoter of national wealth, is by no means the first which would address itself to an enlightened and benevolent mind; yet it will be found to possess intrinsic merits, and to be worthy of the special regard, not only of the political economist, but of the lawgiver and moralist. Nature fastens upon us original and inexorable necessities in regard to food, raiment and shelter. Though these physical wants are among the lowest that belong to our being, yet there is a view of them which is not sordid or ignoble. They must be first served, because if denied, forthwith the race is extinct. They domineer over us, and until supplied, their importunate

clamor will drown every appeal to higher capacities. No hungry or houseless people ever were, or ever will be, an intelligent or a moral one. It is found that the church, the lecture-room, and the hall of science, flourish best where regard is paid to the institution for savings. The divine charities of Christian love are often straitened, because our means of benevolence fall short of our desires.

I proceed then to show that education has a power of ministering to our personal and material wants beyond all other agencies, whether excellence of climate, spontaneity of production, mineral resources, or mines of silver and gold. Every wise parent and community, desiring the prosperity of their children, even in the most worldly sense, will spare no pains in giving them a generous education.

During the past year I have opened a correspondence, and availed myself of all opportunities to hold personal interviews with many of the most practical, sagacious and intelligent business men amongst us, who for many years have had large numbers of persons in their employment. My object has been to ascertain the difference in the productive ability,—where natural capacities have been equal,—between the educated and the uneducated,—between a man or woman whose mind has been awakened to thought and supplied with the rudiments of knowledge, by a good Common School education, and one whose faculties have never been developed, or aided in emerging from their original darkness and torpor by such a privilege. For this purpose I have conferred and corresponded with manufacturers of all kinds, with machinists, engineers, rail-road contractors, officers in the army, &c. These various classes of persons have means of determining the effects of education on individuals, equal in their natural abilities, which other classes do not possess. A farmer hiring a laborer, for one season, who has received a good Common School education; and, the ensuing season, hiring another who has not enjoyed this advantage, although he may be personally convinced of the relative value or profitableness of their services, yet he will rarely have any

exact data or tests to refer to, by which he can measure the superiority of the former over the latter. They do not work side by side, so that he can institute a comparison between the amounts of labor they perform. They may cultivate different fields, where the ease of tillage or the fertility of the soils may be different. They may rear crops under the influence of different seasons, so that he cannot discriminate between what is referable to the bounty of nature, and what to superiority in judgment or skill. Similar difficulties exist, in estimating the amount and value of female labor in the household. And as to the mechanic also,—the carpenter, the mason, the blacksmith, the tool-maker of any kind,—there are a thousand circumstances which we call accidental, that mingle their influences in giving quality and durability to their work, and prevent us from making a precise estimate of the relative value of any two men's handicraft. Individual differences too, in regard to a single article, or a single day's work, may be too minute to be noticed or appreciated, while the aggregate of these differences at the end of a few years, may make all the difference between a poor and a rich man. No observing man can have failed to notice the difference between two workmen, one of whom,—to use a proverbial expression,—always hits the nail on the head, while the other loses half his strength and destroys half his nails, by the awkwardness of his blows; but perhaps few men have thought of the difference in the results of two such men's labor, at the end of twenty years.

But when hundreds of men or women work side by side, in the same factory, at the same machinery, in making the same fabrics, and, by a fixed rule of the establishment, labor the same number of hours each day; and when, also, the products of each operative can be counted in number, weighed by the pound, or measured by the yard or cubic foot,—then it is perfectly practicable to determine with arithmetical exactness, the productions of one individual and one class as compared with those of another individual and another class.

So where there are different kinds of labor, some simple, oth-

ers complicated, and of course requiring different degrees of intelligence and skill, it is easy to observe what class of persons rise from a lower to a higher grade of employment.

This too is not to be forgotten, that in a manufacturing or mechanical establishment, or among a set of hands engaged in filling up a valley or cutting down a hill, where scores of people are working together, the absurd and adventitious distinctions of society do not intrude. The capitalist and his agents are looking for the greatest amount of labor, or the largest income in money from their investments; and they do not promote a dunce to a station, where he will destroy raw material, or slacken industry, because of his name, or birth, or family connections. The obscurest and humblest person has an open and fair field for competition. That he proves himself capable of earning more money for his employer, is a testimonial, better than a diploma from all the colleges.

Now many of the most intelligent and valuable men in our community, in compliance with my request,—for which I tender them my public and grateful acknowledgements,—have examined their books for a series of years, and have ascertained both the quality and the amount of work performed by persons in their employment; and the result of the investigation is a most astonishing superiority in productive power, on the part of the educated over the uneducated laborer. The hand is found to be another hand, when guided by an intelligent mind. Processes are performed, not only more rapidly, but better, when faculties which have been exercised in early life, furnish their assistance. Individuals who, without the aid of knowledge, would have been condemned to perpetual inferiority of condition, and subjected to all the evils of want and poverty, rise to competence and independence, by the uplifting power of education. In great establishments, and among large bodies of laboring men, where all services are rated according to their pecuniary value, where there are no extrinsic circumstances to bind a man down to a fixed position, after he has shown a capacity to rise above it;—where, indeed, men pass by each other, ascending or descend-

ing in their grades of labor, just as easily and certainly as particles of water of different degrees of temperature glide by each other,—there it is found as an almost invariable fact,—other things being equal,—that those who have been blessed with a good Common School education, rise to a higher and a higher point, in the kinds of labor performed, and also in the rate of wages paid, while the ignorant sink, like dregs, and are always found at the bottom.

I now proceed to lay before the Board some portions of the evidence I have obtained,—first inserting my Circular Letter, in answer to which, communications have been made.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

To ———

DEAR SIR,—My best and only apology for taking the liberty to address you, will be found in the object I have in view, which, therefore, I proceed to state without further preface.

In fulfilling the duties with which I have been entrusted by the Board of Education, I am led into frequent conversation and correspondence, not only with persons in every part of the State, but more or less with every class and description of persons in the whole community.

I regret to say, that among these, I occasionally meet with individuals, who, although very differently circumstanced in life, cordially agree in their indifference towards the cause of common education; and some of whom even profess to be alarmed at possible mischiefs that may come in its train, and therefore stand in its path and obstruct its advancement.

The individuals who thus maintain an attitude of neutrality, or assume one of active opposition, are either persons who, in their worldly circumstances, are deemed the favorites of fortune; or, they are persons who are alike strangers to mental cultivation, and to all the outward and ordinary signs of temporal prosperity. In a word, they are found, in regard to their worldly condition, at the two extremes of the social scale. I would, by no means, be understood to say, that any considerable proportion of the men of wealth amongst us, look with an unfriendly eye, on the general diffusion of the means of knowledge. On the contrary, some of the best friends of education are to be found

amongst this class, who uniting abundance of means with benevolence of disposition, are truly efficient in advancing the work. Nor, on this subject, are the lines of demarcation between parties, broadly drawn, but they shade off by imperceptible degrees, from friends to opponents.

But this I do mean to say, that there are men of wealth and leisure, too numerous to be overlooked in a calculation of friendly and of adverse agencies, who profess to fear that a more thorough and comprehensive education for the whole people, will destroy contentment, loosen habits of industry, engender a false ambition, and prompt to an incursion into their own favored sphere, by which great loss will accrue to themselves, without any corresponding benefit to the invaders.

The other class are those who, suffering from a neglected or a perverted education in themselves, seem incapable of appreciating, either the temporal and material well-being, or the mental elevation and enjoyment, which it is the prerogative of a good education to confer. These two parties, though alien from each other, in all other respects, are allies here ; and, although with the exception of a very few towns in the Commonwealth, they are not numerically strong, yet by adroitly implicating other questions with that of the Public Schools, they are able in many cases to baffle all efforts at reform and improvement.

The views of these parties I believe to be radically wrong, anti-social, anti-Republican, anti-Christian ;—and I believe that all action in pursuance of them will impair the best interests of society, and originate a train of calamities, in which not only their advocates, but all portions of the community will be involved. Convinced that such is the inevitable and accelerating tendency of such views, it seems to me to be the duty of the friends of mankind to meet them, with fairness and a conciliatory spirit, indeed, but with earnestness and energy ; and to confute them by the production of evidence and the exposition of principles.

It is for this reason that I address you, and solicit a reply founded upon your personal knowledge, to the following questions.

First,—Have you had large numbers of persons in your employment or under your superintendence ? If so, will you please to state how many ? Within what period of time ? In what department of business ? Whether at different places ? Whether natives or foreigners ?

Second,—Have you observed differences among the persons you have employed, growing out of differences in their education, *and independent of their natural abilities* ; that is, whether as a class, those who from early life, have been accustomed to exercise their minds by reading and studying, have greater docility and quickness in applying

themselves to work ; and, after the simplest details are mastered, have they greater aptitude, dexterity or ingenuity in comprehending ordinary processes, or in originating new ones ? Do they more readily or frequently devise new modes by which the same amount of work can be better done, or by which more work can be done in the same time, or by which raw material or motive-power can be economized ? In short, do you obtain more work and better work with less waste, from those who have received what, in Massachusetts, we call a good Common School education, or from those who have grown up in neglect and ignorance ? Is there any difference in the earnings of these two classes, and consequently in their wages ?

Third,—What, within your knowledge, has been the effect of higher degrees of mental application and culture upon the domestic and social habits of persons in your employment ? Is this class more cleanly in their persons, their dress and their households ; and do they enjoy a greater immunity from those diseases which originate in a want of personal neatness and purity ? Are they more exemplary in their deportment and conversation, devoting more time to intellectual pursuits or to the refining art of music, and spending their evenings and leisure hours more with their families, and less at places of resort for idle and dissipated men ? Is a smaller portion of them addicted to intemperance ? Are their houses kept in a superior condition ? Does a more economical and judicious mode of living purchase greater comforts at the same expense, or equal comforts with less means ? Are their families better brought up, more respectably dressed, more regularly attendant upon the school and the church ; and do their children when arrived at years of maturity, enter upon the active scenes of life with better prospects of success ?

Fourth,—In regard to standing and respectability among co-laborers, neighbors, and fellow-citizens generally, how do those who have enjoyed and improved the privilege of good Common Schools, compare with the neglected and the illiterate ? Do the former exercise greater influence among their associates ? Are they more often applied to for advice and counsel in cases of difficulty ; or selected as umpires or arbitrators for the decision of minor controversies ? Are higher and more intelligent circles for acquaintance open to them, from conversation and intercourse with which, their own minds can be constantly improved ? Are they more likely to rise from grade to grade in the scale of labor, until they enter departments where greater skill, judgment, and respon-

sibility are required, and which therefore command a larger remuneration? Are they more likely to rise from the condition of employees and to establish themselves in business on their own account?

Fifth,—Have you observed any difference in the classes above named, (I speak of them as classes, for there will of course be individual exceptions,) in regard to punctuality and fidelity in the performance of duties? Which class is most regardful of the rights of others, and most intelligent and successful in securing their own? You will of course perceive that this question involves a more general one, viz., from which of the above described classes, have those who possess property, and who hope to transmit it to their children, most to fear from secret aggression, or from such public degeneracy as will loosen the bands of society, corrupt the testimony of witnesses, violate the sanctity of the juror's oath and substitute as a rule of right, the power of a numerical majority, for the unvarying principles of justice?

Sixth,—Finally, in regard to those who possess the largest shares in the stock of worldly goods, could there, in your opinion, be any police so vigilant and effective, for the protection of all the rights of person, property and character, as such a sound and comprehensive education and training, as our system of Common Schools could be made to impart; and would not the payment of a sufficient tax to make such education and training universal, be the cheapest means of self-protection and insurance? And in regard to that class which, from the accident of birth and parentage, are subjected to the privations and the temptations of poverty, would not such an education open to them new resources in habits of industry and economy, in increased skill, and the awakening of inventive power, which would yield returns a thousand fold greater than can ever be hoped for, from the most successful clandestine depredations, or open invasion of the property of others?

I am aware, my Dear Sir, that to every intelligent and reflecting man, these inquiries will seem superfluous and nugatory; and your first impulse may be, to put some such interrogatory to me in reply, as whether the sun has any influence on vegetable growth, or whether it is expedient to have windows in our houses for the admission of light. I acknowledge the close analogy of the cases in point of self-evidence; but my reply is, that while we have influential persons, who dwell with us in the same common mansion of society, and who, having secured for themselves a few well-lighted apartments, now insist that total darkness is better for a portion of the occupants born and dwelling under

the same roof ;—and while, unfortunately, a portion of these benighted occupants from never having seen more than the feeblest glimmerings of the light of day, insist that it is better for them and their children, to remain blind ;—while these opinions continue to exist I hold that it is necessary to adduce facts and arguments, and to present motives, which shall prove both to the blinded and those who would keep them so, the value and beauty of light.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

P. S. If the above shall give you a general outline of my object, I would thank you to fill it up ; even though parts of it may not be distinctly indicated by the questions.

Letter from J. K. Mills, Esq.

Boston, Dec. 29, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have endeavored, since I received your letter, to collect such information as would enable me to answer your questions. The house with which I am connected in business, has had for the last ten years, the principal direction of cotton mills, machine shops and calico printing works, in which are constantly employed about three thousand persons. The opinions I have formed of the effects of a Common School education upon our manufacturing population, are the result of personal observation and inquiries, and are confirmed by the testimony of the overseers and agents, who are brought into immediate contact with the operatives. They are as follows :—

1.—That the rudiments of a Common School education are essential to the attainment of skill and expertness as laborers, or to consideration and respect in the civil and social relations of life.

2.—That very few, who have not enjoyed the advantages of a Common School education, ever rise above the lowest class of operatives ; and that the labor of this class, when it is employed in manufacturing operations, which require even a very moderate degree of manual or mental dexterity, is unproductive.

3.—That a large majority of the overseers, and others employed in situations which require a high degree of skill, in particular branches ; which, oftentimes, require a good general knowledge of business, and, *always*, an unexceptionable moral character, have made their way up from the condition of common laborers, with no other advantage over

a large proportion of those they have left behind, than that derived from a better education.

A statement made from the books of one of the manufacturing companies under our direction, will show the relative number of the two classes, and the earnings of each. This mill may be taken as a fair index of all the others.

The average number of operatives annually employed for the last three years, is 1200. Of this number, there are 45 unable to write their names, or about 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.

The average of women's wages, in the departments requiring the most skill, is \$2,50 per week, exclusive of board.

The average of wages in the lowest departments, is \$1,25 per week.

Of the 45 who are unable to write, 29, or about two thirds, are employed in the lowest department. The difference between the wages earned by the 45, and the average wages of an equal number of the better educated class, is about 27 per cent. in favor of the latter.

The difference between the wages earned by 29 of the lowest class, and the same number in the higher, is 66 per cent.

Of 17 persons filling the most responsible situations in the mills, 10 have grown up in the establishment from common laborers or apprentices.

This statement does not include an importation of 63 persons from Manchester, in England, in 1839. Among these persons, there was scarcely one who could read or write, and although a part of them had been accustomed to work in cotton mills, yet, either from incapacity or idleness, they were unable to earn sufficient to pay for their subsistence, and at the expiration of a few weeks, not more than half a dozen remained in our employment.

In some of the print works, a large proportion of the operatives are foreigners. Those who are employed in the branches which require a considerable degree of skill, are as well educated as our people, in similar situations. But the common laborers, as a class, are without any education, and their average earnings are about two thirds only of those of our lowest classes, although the prices paid to each are the same, for the same amount of work.

Among the men and boys employed in our machine shops, the want of education is quite rare; indeed, I do not know an instance of a person who is unable to read and write, and many have had a good Common School education. To this may be attributed the fact that a large

proportion of persons who fill the higher and more responsible situations, came from this class of workmen.

From these statements, you will be able to form some estimate, in dollars and cents, at least, of the advantages even of a little education to the operative ; and there is not the least doubt that the employer is equally benefited. He has the security for his property that intelligence, good morals, and a just appreciation of the regulations of his establishment, always afford. His machinery and mills, which constitute a large part of his capital, are in the hands of persons, who, by their skill, are enabled to use them to their utmost capacity, and to prevent any unnecessary depreciation.

Each operative in a cotton mill may be supposed to represent from one thousand to twelve hundred dollars of the capital invested in the mill and its machinery. It is only from the most diligent and economical use of this capital that the proprietor can expect a profit. A fraction less than one half of the cost of manufacturing common cotton goods, when a mill is in full operation, is made up of charges which are permanent. If the product is reduced in the ratio of the capacity of the two classes of operatives mentioned in this statement, it will be seen that the cost will be increased in a compound ratio.

My belief is, that the best cotton mill in New England, with such operatives only as the 45 mentioned above, who are unable to write their names, would never yield the proprietor a profit ; that the machinery would soon be worn out, and he would be left, in a short time, with a population no better than that which is represented, as I suppose, very fairly, by the importation from England.

I cannot imagine any situation in life, where the want of a Common School education would be more severely felt, or be attended with worse consequences, than in our manufacturing villages ; nor, on the other hand, is there any, where such advantages can be improved, with greater benefit to all parties.

There is more excitement and activity in the minds of people living in masses, and if this expends itself in any of the thousand vicious indulgences with which they are sure to be tempted, the road to destruction is travelled over with a speed exactly corresponding to the power employed.

Very truly,

Yours, &c.

JAMES K. MILLS.

HON. HORACE MANN.

Letter from H. Bartlett, Esq.

LOWELL, Dec. 1, 1841.

HON. HORACE MANN,

DEAR SIR,—In replying to your interrogatories, respecting the effect of education upon the labouring classes, I might be very brief, but the subject is one in which I feel so deep an interest, that I propose to go a little into detail, and hope to do so without being tedious.

I have been engaged, for nearly ten years, in manufacturing, and have had the constant charge of from 400 to 900 persons, during that time. The greater part of them have been Americans; but there have always been more or less foreigners. During this time, I have had charge of two different establishments, in different parts of the State.

In answering your second interrogatory, I can say, that I have come in contact with a very great variety of character and disposition, and have seen mind applied to production in the Mechanic and Manufacturing Arts, possessing different degrees of intelligence, from gross ignorance to a high degree of cultivation;—and I have no hesitation in affirming that I have found the best educated, to be the most profitable help; even those females who merely tend machinery, give a result somewhat in proportion to the advantages enjoyed in early life for education,—those who have a good Common School education giving, as a class, invariably, a better production than those brought up in ignorance.

The former make the best wages. If any one should doubt the fact, let him examine the pay-roll of any establishment in New England, and ascertain the character of the girls who get the most money, and he will be satisfied that I am correct. I am equally clear that, as a class, they do their work better. There are many reasons why it should be so. They have more order, and system; they not only keep their persons neater, but their machinery in better condition.

But there are other advantages, besides mere knowledge growing out of a good Common School education. Such an education is calculated to strengthen the whole system, intellectual, moral and physical. It educates the whole man or woman, and gives him or her more energy and greater capacity for production in all departments of labor. Minds formed by such an education are superior in the combination and arrangement of what is already known, and more frequently devise new methods of operation.

Your third inquiry relates to the effect of education upon the domestic and social habits of persons in my employ. I have never considered

mere knowledge, valuable as it is in itself to the laborer, as the only advantage derived from a good Common School education. I have uniformly found the better educated as a class possessing a higher and better state of morals, more orderly and respectful in their deportment, and more ready to comply with the wholesome and necessary regulations of an establishment. And in times of agitation, on account of some change in regulations or wages, I have always looked to the most intelligent, best educated and the most moral for support, and have seldom been disappointed. For, while they are the last to submit to imposition, they *reason*, and if your requirements are reasonable, they will generally acquiesce, and exert a salutary influence upon their associates. But the ignorant and uneducated I have generally found the most turbulent and troublesome, acting under the impulse of excited passion and jealousy.

The former appear to have an interest in sustaining good order, while the latter seem more reckless of consequences. And, to my mind, all this is perfectly natural. The better educated have more, and stronger attachments binding them to the place where they are. They are generally neater, as I have before said, in their persons, dress and houses; surrounded with more comforts, with fewer of "the ills which flesh is heir to." In short, I have found the educated, as a class, more cheerful and contented,—devoting a portion of their leisure time to reading and intellectual pursuits, more with their families and less in scenes of dissipation.

The good effect of all this, is seen in the more orderly and comfortable appearance of the whole household, but no where more strikingly than in the children. A mother who has had a good Common School education will rarely suffer her children to grow up in ignorance.

As I have said, this class of persons is more quiet, more orderly, and I may add, more regular in their attendance upon public worship, and more punctual in the performance of all their duties.

Your fourth inquiry refers to the relative stand taken in society by those who have received an early education, and my answers to your inquiries under that head, might be inferred from what I have already said. My remarks before have referred quite as much to females as to males, but what I shall say under this, will refer particularly to the latter.

I have generally observed individuals exerting an influence among their co-laborers and citizens, somewhat in proportion to their education. And, in cases of difficulty and arbitration, the most ignorant have paid an involuntary respect to the value of education, by the selection

of those who have enjoyed its benefits, for the settlement of their controversies.

It would be very difficult, if not impossible, for a young man, who had not an education equal to a good Common School education, to rise from grade to grade, until he should obtain the birth of an Overseer; and in making promotions, as a general thing, it would be unnecessary to make inquiry as to the education of the young men from whom you would select; for their mental cultivation would be sufficiently indicated by their general appearance and standing among their fellows; and, if you had reference to merit and qualifications, very seldom indeed would an uneducated young man rise to "*a better place and better pay.*"

Young men who expect to resort to manufacturing establishments for employment, cannot prize too highly a good education. It will give them standing among their associates, and be the means of promotion from their employers.

Your fifth interrogatory refers to difference of moral character in the two classes, and the dangers which society or men of property have to apprehend from the one or the other. I do not know that I can better answer your inquiries under this head than to give you my views of the value, in a *pecuniary* point of view, of education and morality to the stockholders of our manufacturing establishments. If they have no danger to apprehend from a general diffusion of knowledge among those in their employ, if it is a fact that that class of help which has enjoyed a good Common School education, are the most tractable, yielding most readily to reasonable requirements, exerting a salutary and conservative influence in times of excitement, while the most ignorant are the most refractory; then, it appears to me that the public at large ought to be satisfied that they have more danger to apprehend from the ignorant than from the well educated. I am aware that there is a feeling to a certain, but I hope limited extent, that knowledge among the great mass is dangerous; that it creates discontent, and tends to insubordination. But I believe the fear to be groundless, and that our danger will come from an opposite source. In my view, there is a connection between education and morals, and I believe that our Common Schools have been nurseries not only of learning, but of sound morality, and I trust they will always be surrounded by such influences as will strengthen and confirm the moral principles of our youth, and I am confident that so long as that shall be the case, society is safe.

From my observation and experience, I am perfectly satisfied that the owners of manufacturing property have a deep pecuniary interest in the education and morals of their help ; and I believe the time is not distant when the truth of this will appear more and more clear. And as competition becomes more close, and small circumstances of more importance in turning the scale in favor of one establishment over another, I believe it will be seen that the establishment, other things being equal, which has the best educated and the most moral help, will give the greatest production at the least cost per pound. So confident am I that production is affected by the intellectual and moral character of help, that whenever a mill or a room should fail to give the proper amount of work, my first inquiry, after that respecting the condition of the machinery, would be, *as to the character of the help*, and if the deficiency remained any great length of time, I am sure I should find many who had made their marks upon the pay-roll, being unable to write their names ; and I should be greatly disappointed if I did not, upon inquiry, find a portion of them of irregular habits and suspicious character. My mind has been drawn to this subject for a long time. I have watched its operation, and seen its result, and am satisfied that the pecuniary interest of the owners is promoted by the general diffusion of knowledge and morality among those in their employ.

Lowell is a striking illustration of the truth of my remarks on this subject. Probably no other place has done as much for the education and morality of those engaged in manufacturing. She has 23 public schools, 15 churches, and numerous associations for intellectual improvement ;—and the result is seen, not only in the orderly and temperate character of the people, but in the great productiveness of the mills. And where, I would ask, is manufacturing stock of more value ? If any one doubts the connection between these institutions and the price of stocks, let the former be destroyed, let those lights be extinguished, let ignorance and vice take the place of intelligence and virtue, let the prevailing influence here be against schools and churches, and my opinion is, that the moral character of the people would not decline faster than the price of manufacturing stocks. The founders of this place were clear and far-sighted men, and they put in operation a train of moral influences which has formed and preserved a community distinguished for intelligence, virtue and great energy of character. Should any owner or manager think otherwise and surround himself with the ignorant and unprincipled, because for a time he might get them for less wages, I am confident that loss in production would more than

keep pace with reduction in pay,—to say nothing of the insecurity of property in the hands of such persons.

In short, in closing my answer to your fifth interrogatory, I consider that “those who possess property and hope to transmit it to their children” have nothing to fear from the general diffusion of knowledge, that if their rights are ever invaded or their property rendered insecure, it will be when ignorance has corrupted the public mind and prepared it for the controlling influence of some master-spirit possessing intelligence without principle.

Finally, in answering your sixth and last interrogatory, I remark that “those who possess the greatest share in the stock of worldly goods” are deeply interested in this subject as one of mere insurance ;—that the most effectual way of making insurance on their property would be to contribute from it enough to sustain an efficient system of Common School education, thereby educating the whole mass of mind, and constituting it a police more effective than peace officers or prisons. By so doing they would bestow a benefaction upon “that class, who from the accident of birth or parentage are subjected to the privations and temptations of poverty,” and would do much to remove the prejudice, and to strengthen the bands of union between the different and extreme portions of society. The great majority always have been and probably always will be comparatively poor, while a few will possess the greatest share of this world's goods. And it is a wise provision of Providence which connects so intimately, and as I think so indissolubly, the greatest good of the many with the highest interest of the few.

Yours, very respectfully and truly,

H. BARTLETT.

Letter from J. Clark, Esq.

LOWELL, Dec. 3, 1841.

DEAR SIR,—I owe you an apology for not having made an earlier reply to your inquiries respecting the influences of education upon the character and conduct of our operatives. I have to plead in excuse for my neglect an unusual press of business, which has almost literally occupied every moment of my time ; and while I was seeking a leisure hour to devote to this purpose, my friend, Mr Bartlett, has kindly allowed me to read the very full and particular answers prepared by him

to your several interrogatories. [See preceding letter.] I find that Mr Bartlett's experience and views upon the whole subject coincide so entirely with my own, that it would merely be a tax upon your time as well as mine, if I were to go in detail over the same ground. I will therefore, only say that, during the last eight years, I have had under my superintendence upon an average about 1500 persons of both sexes; and that my experience fully sustains and confirms the results to which Mr Bartlett has arrived. I have found, with very few exceptions, the best educated among my hands to be the most capable, intelligent, energetic, industrious, economical and moral; that they produce the best work, and the most of it, with the least injury to the machinery. They are, in all respects, the most useful, profitable, and the safest of our operatives; and, as a class, they are more thrifty and more apt to accumulate property for themselves. I am very sure that neither men of property, nor society at large, have any thing to fear from a more general diffusion of knowledge, nor from the extension and improvement of our system of Common Schools.

I have recently instituted some inquiries into the comparative wages of our different classes of operatives; and among other results, I find the following applicable to our present purpose. On our Pay-Roll for the last month, are borne the names of 1229 female operatives, 40 of whom receipted for their pay by "making their mark." Twenty-six of these have been employed in job-work, that is, they were paid according to the quantity of work turned off from their machines. The average pay of these twenty-six falls $18\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. below the general average of those engaged in the same departments.

Again, we have in our mills about 150 females who have, at some time, been engaged in *teaching schools*. Many of them teach during the summer months, and work in the mills in winter. The average wages of these ex-teachers I find to be $17\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. *above the general average of our mills, and about 40 per cent. above the wages of the twenty-six who cannot write their names.* It may be said that they are generally employed in the higher departments, where the pay is better. This is true, but this again may be, in most cases, fairly attributed to their better education, which brings us to the same result. If I had included in my calculations, the remaining 14 of the 40, who are mostly sweepers and scrubbers, and who are paid by the day, the contrasts would have been still more striking; but having no well educated females engaged in this department with whom to compare them, I have

omitted them altogether. In arriving at the above results I have considered the *net wages* merely,—the price of board being in all cases the same. I do not consider these results as either extraordinary, or surprising, but as a part only of the legitimate and proper fruits of a better cultivation and fuller development of the intellectual and moral powers.

Yours, very respectfully,

JOHN CLARK,

Superintendent Merrimack Mills.

HON. HORACE MANN, *Boston.*

Extracts from a Letter of Jonathan Crane, Esq., for several years a large Contractor on the Rail-roads in Massachusetts.

My principal business for about 10 years past, has been grading rail-roads. During that time, the number of men employed has varied from 50 to 350, nearly all Irishmen, with the exception of superintendents. Some facts have been so apparent, that my superintendents and myself could not but notice them ;—these I will freely give you. I should say that not less than 3000 different men have been, more or less in my employment during the before mentioned period, and that the number that could read and write intelligibly, was about one to eight. Independently of their natural endowments, those who could read and write, and had some knowledge of the first principles of arithmetic, have almost invariably manifested a readiness to apprehend what was required of them, and skill in performing it, and have more readily and frequently devised new modes by which the same amount of work could be better done. Some of these men we have selected for superintendents, and they are now contractors. With regard to the morals of the two classes, we have seen very little difference ; but the better educated class are more cleanly in their persons, and their households, and generally discover more refinement in their manners, and practice a more economical mode in their living. Their families are better brought up, and they are more anxious to send their children to school. In regard to their standing and respectability among co-laborers, neighbors and fellow-citizens, the more educated are much more respected ; and

in settling minor controversies, they are more commonly applied to as arbitrators. With regard to the morals of the two classes before mentioned, permit me to remark, that it furnishes an illustration of the truth of a common saying, that merely cultivating the understanding without improving the heart, does not make a man better. The more extensively knowledge and virtue prevail in our country, the greater security have we that our institutions will not be overthrown. Our Common School system, connected as it is, or ought to be, with the inculcation of sound and practical morality, is the most vigilant and efficient police for the protection of persons, property and character, that could be devised; and is it not gratifying that men of wealth are beginning to see that, if they would protect their property and persons, a portion of that property should be expended for the education of the poorer classes? Merely selfish considerations would lead any man of wealth to do this, if he would only view the subject in its true light. No where is this subject better understood than in Massachusetts, and the free discussions which have of late been held, in county and town meetings, have had the effect to call the attention of the public to it; and I trust the time is not far distant, when, at least in Massachusetts, the *Common School System* will accomplish all the good which it is capable of producing. Why do we not in these United States have a revolution, almost annually, as in the republics of South America? Ignorance and vice always have invited, and always will, invite such characters as Shakespeare's Jack Cade to rule over them. And may we not feel an assurance, that in proportion as the nation shall recover from the baneful influence of intemperance, so will its attention be directed preëminently to the promotion of virtue and knowledge, and no where in our country, will an incompetent or intemperate Common School teacher, be intrusted with the education of our children.

These are a fair specimen, and no more than a fair specimen, of a mass of facts which I have obtained from the most authentic sources. They seem to prove incontestibly that education is not only a moral renovator, and a multiplier of intellectual power, but that it is also the most prolific parent of material riches. It has a right, therefore, not only to be included in the

grand inventory of a nation's resources, but to be placed at the very head of that inventory. It is not only the most honest and honorable, but the surest means of amassing property. A trespasser or a knave may forcibly or fraudulently appropriate the earnings of others to himself; but education has the prerogative of originating or generating property, more certainly and more rapidly than it was ever accumulated by force or fraud. It has more than the quality of an ordinary mercantile commodity, from which the possessor realizes but a single profit as it passes through his hands;—it rather resembles fixed capital yielding constant and high revenues. As it enjoys an immunity from common casualties, it incurs no cost for insurance or defence. It is above the reach of changes in administration, or in administrative policy; and it is free from those fluctuations of trade which agitate the market, and make it so frequent an occurrence, that a merchant who goes to bed a man of wealth at night, rises a pauper in the morning. Possessing these qualities, it has the highest economical value, and although statesmen who assail or defend, who raise up or put down, systems of commercial, manufacturing or agricultural policy, have seldom or never deigned to look at education as the grand agent for the development or augmentation of national resources, yet it measures the efficacy of every other means of aggrandizement, and is more powerful in the production and gainful employment of the total wealth of a country, than all other things mentioned in the books of the political economist. Education is an antecedent agency, for it must enlighten mankind in the choice of pursuits, it must guide them in the selection and use of the most appropriate means, it must impart that confidence and steadiness of purpose which results from comprehending the connections of a long train of events and seeing the end from the beginning, or all enterprises will terminate in ruin.

Considering education, then, as a producer of wealth, it follows that the more educated a people are, the more will they abound in all those conveniences, comforts and satisfactions

which money will buy; and, other things being equal, the increase of competency and the decline of pauperism will be measurable on this scale. There are special reasons giving peculiar force to these considerations in the State of Massachusetts. Our population is principally divided into agriculturists, manufacturers and mechanics. We have no *idle* class,—no class born to such hereditary wealth, as supersedes the necessity of labor, and no class subsisting by the services of hereditary bondmen. All, with exceptions too minute to be noticed, must live by their own industry and frugality. The master and the laborer are one; and hence the necessity that all should have the health and strength by which they can work, and the judgment and knowledge by which they can plan and direct. The muscle of a laborer and the intelligence of an employer must be united in the same person.

The healthful and praise-worthy employment of Agriculture, requires knowledge for its successful prosecution. In this department of industry, we are in perpetual contact with the forces of nature. We are constantly dependent upon them for the pecuniary returns and profits of our investments, and hence the necessity of knowing what those forces are, and under what circumstances they will operate most efficiently, and will most bountifully reward our original outlay of money and time. In the presence of the savage, the exuberance of nature may cover the earth with magnificent forests, through whole degrees of latitude and longitude, and clothe and beautify it with the grasses and flowers of the prairie to whose ocean-like expanse the eye can discover no shore;—magnificent and poetic spectacles, indeed,—yet, for the sustentation of human life, for the existence and extension of human happiness, almost valueless. But under the art of agriculture, which is only another name for the knowledge of natural powers, millions are feasted on a territory where, before, a hundred starved. Perhaps there is no spot in the world of such limited extent, where there is a greater variety of agricultural productions than in Massachusetts. This brings into requisition all that chemical and

experimental knowledge which pertains to the rotation of crops, and the enrichment of soils. If rotation be disregarded, the repeated demand upon the same soil to produce the same crop, will exhaust it of the elements on which that particular crop will best thrive ; and if its chemical ingredients and affinities are not understood, an attempt may be made to reinforce it by substances with which it is already surcharged, instead of renovating it with those of which it has been exhausted by previous growths. But for these arrangements and adaptations, knowledge is the grand desideratum ; and the addition of a new fact to a farmer's mind, will often increase the amount of his harvests more than the addition of acres to his estate. Why is it, that, if we except Egypt, all the remaining territory of Africa, containing nearly ten millions of square miles, with a soil, most of which is incomparably more fertile by nature, produces less for the sustenance of man and beast, than England, whose territory is only fifty thousand square miles. In the latter country, knowledge has been a substitute for a genial climate and an exuberant soil ; while in the former, it is hardly a figurative expression to say, that all the maternal kindness of nature, powerful and benignant as she is, has been repulsed by the ignorance of her children. Doubtless, industry as well as knowledge is indispensable to productiveness ; but knowledge must precede industry, or the latter will work to so little effect as to become discouraged and to relapse into the slothfulness of savage life. But without further exposition, it may be remarked generally, that the spread of intelligence, through the instrumentality of good books, and the cultivation in our children of the faculties of observing, comparing and reasoning, through the medium of good schools, would add millions to the agricultural products of the Commonwealth, without imposing upon the husbandman an additional hour of labor. It would be as foolish for us as for the African, to suppose that we have reached the ultimate boundary of improvement.

In regard to another branch of industry, the State of Massa-

chusetts presents a phenomenon which, all things being considered, is unequalled in any part of the world. I refer to the distribution or apportionment of its citizens, among the different departments of labor. With a population of only eighty-seven thousand engaged in agriculture, we have eighty-five thousand engaged in manufactures and trades. The proportion, therefore, in this State, of the latter to the former, is almost as one to one, while the proportion for the whole Union falls but a fraction below one to five. If to the eighty-five thousand engaged in manufactures and trades, are added the twenty-seven, (almost twenty-eight) thousand employed in navigating the ocean, and to whom, as a class, the succeeding views are, to a great extent, applicable, we shall find that the capital and labor of the State embarked in the latter employments, far exceed those devoted to agricultural pursuits.

Now for the successful prosecution,—it may almost be said, for the very existence amongst us of the manufacturing and mechanic arts, there must be, not only the exactness of science, but also exactness or skill in the application of scientific principles, throughout the whole processes, either of constructing machinery, or of transforming raw materials into finished fabrics. This ability to make exact and skilful applications of science to an unlimited variety of materials, and especially to the subtle but most energetic agencies of nature, is one of the latest attainments of the human mind. It is remarkable that astronomy, sculpture, painting, poetry, oratory, and even ethical philosophy, had made great progress, thousands of years before the era of the manufacturing and mechanic arts. This era, indeed, has but just commenced; and already, the abundance, and,—what is of far greater importance,—the universality of personal, domestic and social comforts it has created, constitutes one of the most important epochs in the history of civilization. The cultivation of these arts is conferring a thousand daily accommodations and pleasures upon the laborer in his cottage, which, only two or three centuries ago, were luxuries in the palace of the monarch. Through circumstances incident to

the introduction of all economical improvements, there has hitherto been great inequality in the distribution of their advantages, but their general tendency is greatly to ameliorate the condition of the mass of mankind. It has been estimated that the products of machinery in Great Britain, with a population of eighteen millions, is equal to the labor of hundreds of millions of human hands. This vast gain is effected without the conquest or partitioning of the territory of any neighboring nation, and without rapine or the confiscation of property already accumulated by others. It is an absolute creation of wealth,—that is, of those articles, commodities, improvements, which we appraise and set down, as of a certain monied value, alike in the inventory of a deceased man's estate, and in the grand valuation of a nation's capital. These contributions to human welfare have been derived from knowledge,—from knowing how to employ those natural agencies, which from the beginning of the race had existed, but had lain dormant, or run uselessly away. For mechanical purposes, what is wind, or water, or the force of steam worth, until the ingenuity of man comes in, and places the wind-wheel, the water-wheel, or the piston, *between* these mighty agents and the work he wishes them to perform; but after the invention and intervention of machinery, how powerful they become for all purposes of utility. In a word, these great improvements which distinguish our age from all preceding ages, have been obtained from nature, by addressing her in the language of Science and Art,—the only language she understands,—yet one of such all-prevailing efficacy that she never refuses to comply to the letter with all petitions for wealth or physical power, if they are preferred to her in that dialect.

Now, it is easy to show, both from reasoning, from history and from experience, that an early awakening of the mind, is a prerequisite to success in the useful arts. It must be an awakening, not to feeling merely, but to thought. In the first place, a clearness of perception must be acquired, or the power of taking a correct mental transcript, copy or image of whatever

is seen. This, however, though indispensable, is, by no means, sufficient. It may answer for mere automatic movements,—for the servile copying of the productions of others. The Chinese excel in imitations of this kind ; but, as they have little inventive genius, the learner echoes the teacher, the apprentice repeats the master ; and thus the human mind, for generation after generation, presents the monotonous aspects of a revolving cylinder, which turns up the same phases at each successive revolution. But the talent of improving upon the labors of others, requires not only the capability of receiving an exact mental copy or imprint of all the objects of sense or reasoning ;—it also requires the power of reviving or reproducing, at will, all the impressions or ideas before obtained, and, also, the power of changing their collocations, of rearranging them into new forms, and of adding something to, or removing something from, the original perceptions, in order to make a more perfect plan or model. If a shipwright, for instance, would improve upon all existing specimens of naval architecture, he would first examine as great a number of ships, as possible ;—this done, he would revive the image which each one had imprinted upon his mind ; and, with all the fleets which he had inspected, present to his imagination, he would compare each individual vessel with all the others, make a selection of one part from one, and of another part from another, apply his own knowledge of the laws of moving and of resisting forces, to all, and thus create in his own mind, the complex idea, or model of a ship, more perfect than any of those he had seen. Now, every recitation in a school, if rightly conducted, is a step towards the attainment of this wonderful power. With a course of studies judiciously arranged, and diligently pursued through the years of minority, all the great phenomena of external nature, and the most important productions in all the useful arts, together with the principles on which they are evolved or fashioned, would be successively brought before the understanding of the pupil. He would thus become familiar with the substances of the ma-

terial world, and with their manifold properties and uses, and he would learn the laws,—comparatively few,—by which results, infinitely diversified, are produced. When such a student goes out into life, he carries, as it were, a plan or model of the world, in his own mind. He cannot, therefore, pass, either blindly or with the stupid gaze of the brute creation, by the great objects and processes of nature; but he has an intelligent discernment of their several existences and relations, and their adaptation to the uses of mankind. Neither can he fasten his eye upon any workmanship or contrivance of man, without asking two questions,—first, how is it? and, secondly, how can it be improved? Hence, he has as great an advantage over an ignorant man, as one traveller, in a foreign country, who is familiar with the language of the people where he is journeying, has over another, incapable of understanding a word that he hears. The one, also, carries a map of the whole country in his hand, while the other is without path or guide. Hence it is, too, that all the processes of nature, and the contrivances of art, are so many lessons or communications to an instructed man; but, an uninstructed one walks in the midst of them, like a blind man amongst colors, or a deaf man amongst sounds. The Romans carried their aqueducts from hill-top to hill-top on lofty arches, erected at an immense expenditure of time and money. One idea,—that is, a knowledge of the law of the equilibrium of fluids,—a knowledge of the fact that water in a tube will rise to the level of the fountain, would have enabled a single individual to do with ease, what, without that knowledge, it required the wealth of an empire to accomplish.

It is in ways similar to this,—that is, by accomplishing greater results with less means; by creating products, at once cheaper, better, and by more expeditious methods; and by doing a vast variety of things, otherwise impossible, that the cultivation of mind may be truly said to yield the highest pecuniary requital. Intelligence is the great money-maker,—not by extortion, but by production. There are ten thousand things in every department of life, which, if done in season,

can be done in a minute, but which, if not seasonably done, will require hours, perhaps days or weeks, for their performance. An awakened mind will see and seize the critical juncture; the perceptions of a sluggish one will come too late, if they come at all. A general culture of the faculties gives versatility of talent, so that if the customary business of the laborer is superseded by improvements, he can readily betake himself to another kind of employment; but, an uncultivated mind, is like an automaton which can do only the one thing for which its wheels or springs were made. Brute force expends itself unproductively. It is ignorant of the manner in which nature works, and hence it cannot avail itself of her mighty agencies. Often, indeed, it attempts to oppose nature. It throws itself across the track where her resistless car is moving. But knowledge enables its possessor to employ her agencies in his own service, and he thereby obtains an amount of power, without fee or reward, which thousands of slaves could not give. Every man who consumes a single article, in whose production or transportation the power of steam is used, has it delivered to him cheaper than he could otherwise have obtained it. Every man who can avail himself of this power, in travelling, can perform the business of three days in one, and so far, add two hundred per cent. to the length of his life, as a business man. What innumerable millions has the invention of the cotton-gin, by Whitney, added, and will continue to add, to the wealth of the world,—a part of which is already realized, but, vastly the greater part of which is yet to be received, as each successive day draws for an instalment which would exhaust the treasury of a nation. The instructed and talented man enters the rich domains of nature, not as an intruder, but, as it were, a proprietor, and makes her riches his own.

And why is it that, so far as this Union is concerned, four-fifths of all the improvements, inventions and discoveries in regard to machinery, to agricultural implements, to superior models in ship-building, and to the manufacture of those re-

finest instruments on which accuracy in scientific observations depends, have originated in New England. I believe no adequate reason can be assigned, but the early awakening and training of the power of thought in our children. The suggestion is not made invidiously, but in this connection it has too important a bearing to be omitted,—but let any one, who has resided or travelled in those States where there are no Common Schools, compare the condition of the people at large, as to thrift, order, neatness, and all the external signs of comfort and competence, with the same characteristics of civilization in the farm-houses and villages of New England. These contrasts exist, notwithstanding the fertility of the soil and the abundance of mineral resources, in the former States, as compared with the sterile surface and granite substratum of the latter. Never was a problem more clearly demonstrated than that even a moderate degree of intelligence diffused through the mass of the people, is more than an equivalent for all the prodigality of nature. It is said, indeed, in regard to those States where there are no provisions for general education, that the want of energy and forecast, the absence of labor-saving contrivances and an obtuseness in adapting means to ends, are the consequences of a system of involuntary servitude ; but what is this so far as productiveness is concerned, but a want of knowledge,—what is it but the existence of that mental imbecility and torpor, which arise from personal and hereditary neglect ? In conversing with a gentleman who had possessed most extensive opportunities for acquaintance with men of different countries and of all degrees of intellectual development, he observed that he could employ a common immigrant or a slave, and if he chose, could direct him to shovel a heap of sand from one spot to another, and then back into its former place, and so to and fro, through the day ; and that, with the same food or the same pay, the laborer would perform this tread-mill operation without inquiry or complaint ; but, added he, neither love nor money would prevail on a New Englander to prosecute a piece of work of which he did not see the utility. There is scarcely any

kind of labor, however simple or automatic, which can be so well performed without knowledge in the workman, as with it. It is impossible for an overseer or employer, at all times to supply mind to the laborer. In giving directions for the shortest series or train of operations, something will be omitted or misunderstood ; and without intelligence in the workman, the omission or the mistake will be repeated in the execution.*

It is a fact of universal notoriety, that the manufacturing population of England, as a class, work for half, or less than half the wages of our own. The cost of machinery there, also, is but about half as much as the cost of the same articles with us ; while, our capital when loaned, produces nearly double the rate of English interest. Yet, against these grand adverse circumstances, our manufacturers, with a small percentage of tariff, successfully compete with English capitalists,

* It once happened to me while travelling in one of the south western States, to visit an edifice of a public character, then almost completed. The building had a great number of apartments, which were to be warmed by means of a furnace placed in the cellar, after the manner in which most of our hospitals and large public edifices are warmed. Accordingly, one set of flues had been constructed for conveying the heated and pure air into all the apartments, and another set for conveying the foul air upward into the attic. So far it was well. But unfortunately for the transmission of the air in an upward current and for its escape from the attic when it should arrive there, the roof was completely closed in, neither window, sky-light nor aperture of any kind being left, through which it could find egress. The edifice had been built *from a plan*, and without a knowledge of principles. I regret to add that it was a State institution and had been erected under a Board of Commissioners appointed by the Executive ; and much delay and probably great suffering was endured before the building could be fitted for the reception and occupancy of any class of beings, dependent on breathing for existence. This was a very striking case, but every unintelligent man will make mistakes every day of his life, which are as important to him, and perhaps as ludicrous in the sight of others, as was this attempt of a Commonwealth, to ventilate a building where sixty or seventy persons were constantly to reside, by packing all the impure air snugly away in the garret ! Nature will not abate one tittle of her laws, even to the mightiest earthly sovereign ; but when the humblest individual obtains a knowledge of their exact and immutable operations, she protects him with her ægis, and enriches him with all her bounties.

in many branches of manufacturing business. No explanation can be given of this extraordinary fact, which does not take into the account, the difference of education between the operatives in the two countries. Yet where, in all our Congressional debates upon this subject, or in the discussions and addresses of National Conventions, has this fundamental principle been brought out,—and one, at least, of its most important and legitimate inferences displayed, viz., that it is our wisest policy, as citizens,—if indeed it be not a duty of self-preservation as men,—to improve the education of our whole people, both in its quantity and quality. I have been told by one of our most careful and successful manufacturers, that on substituting, in one of his cotton-mills, a better for a poorer educated class of operatives, he was enabled to add twelve or fifteen per cent. to the speed of his machinery, without any increase of damage or danger from the acceleration. How direct and demonstrative the bearing, which facts like this have upon the wisdom of our law respecting the education of children in manufacturing establishments. What prominence and cogency, do they give to the argument for obeying it, if not from motives of humanity, at least from those of policy and self-interest! I am sorry to say that this benignant and parental law is still, in some cases, openly disregarded; and that there are employers amongst us, who say, that if their hands come punctually to their work, and continue at it during the regular hours, it is immaterial to them what private character they sustain, and whether they attend the evening school or the lyceum lecture on the week day, or go to church on the sabbath.

The number of females in this State, engaged in the various manufactures of cotton, straw-plaiting, &c. has been estimated at forty thousand; and the annual value of their labor, at one hundred dollars each, on an average, or four millions of dollars for the whole. From the facts stated in the letters of Messrs. Mills and Clark, above cited, it appears that there is a difference of not less than fifty per cent between the earnings of the least educated and of the best educated operatives,—between those who make their marks, instead of writing their names, and

those who have been acceptably employed in school-keeping. Now, suppose the whole forty thousand females engaged in the various kinds of manufactures in this Commonwealth, to be degraded to the level of the lowest class, it would follow that their aggregate earnings would fall at once, to two millions of dollars. But, on the other hand, suppose them all to be elevated by mental cultivation to the rank of the highest, and their earnings would rise to the sum of six millions of dollars, annually.

I institute no comparison in regard to the company imported from England, who though accustomed to work in the mills of Manchester, could not earn their living here.

These remarks, in regard to other States or countries, emanate from no boastful or vain-glorious spirit. They come from a very different mood of mind, for I have the profoundest conviction,—and could fill much space with facts that would justify it,—that other communities do not fall short of our own, so much as we fall short of what we might easily become.

A few instances, of a familiar kind, exemplifying the axiom that “knowledge is power,” will close this Report.

M. Redelet, in his work, *Sur L'Art de Bâtir*, gives the following account of an experiment made to test the different amounts of force which, under different circumstances, were necessary to move a block of squared granite, weighing 1080 lbs.

In order to move this block along the floor of a roughly chiselled quarry, it required a force equal to 758 lbs.

To draw the same stone over a floor of planks, it required a force equal to 652 lbs.

Placed on a platform of wood, and drawn over the same floor, it required 606 lbs.

By soaping the two surfaces of wood, the requisite force was reduced to 182 lbs.

Placed on rollers, of three inches diameter, and a force equal to 34 lbs. was sufficient.

Substituting a wooden for a stone floor, and the requisite force was 28 lbs.

With the same rollers on a wooden platform, it required a force equal to 22 lbs. only.

At this point, the experiments of M. Redelet stopped. But, by improvements since effected, in the invention and use of locomotives on rail-roads, a traction or draft of eight pounds is sufficient to move a ton of 2240 lbs.,—so that a force of less than four pounds would now be sufficient to move the granite block of 1080 lbs.;—that is, one hundred and eighty-eight times less than was required in the first instance. When, therefore, mere animal or muscular force was used to move the body, it required about two thirds of its own weight to accomplish the object; but, by adding the contrivances of *mind* to the strength of *muscle*, the force necessary to move it is reduced more than one hundred and eighty-eight times. Here, then, is a partnership, in which *mind* contributes one hundred and eighty-eight shares to the stock, to one share contributed by *muscle*;—or, while *brute strength* represents one man, *ingenuity* or *intelligence* represents one hundred and eighty-eight men!

Dr. Potter, in his late work, entitled “The Principles of Science, applied to the Domestic and Mechanic Arts, and to Manufactures and Agriculture,” has the following, p. 29 n.:

“The increasing powers of the steam-loom, are shown in the following statement, furnished by a manufacturer.

“A very good *hand-weaver*, twenty-five or thirty years of age, will weave *two* pieces of 9-8ths shirting a week.

“In 1823, a *steam-loom weaver*, about fifteen years of age, attending two looms, could weave *seven* similar pieces in a week.

“In 1826, a *steam-loom weaver*, about fifteen years of age, attending two looms, could weave *twelve* similar pieces in a week; some could weave *fifteen* pieces.

“In 1833, a *steam-loom weaver*, from fifteen to twenty years of age, assisted by a girl, about twelve years of age, attending four looms, could weave *eighteen* similar pieces in a week; some could weave *twenty* pieces.’”

Here, then, during a period of only ten years, the application of *mind* to a particular branch of business, enabled a lad of fifteen years of age, assisted by a girl of twelve, to do from

nine to ten times as much work as had before been done by an accomplished and mature workman.

In the manufacture of needles, a number equal to twenty thousand, is thrown promiscuously into a box, mingled heads and points, and crossing each other in every possible direction. This happens several times during the various stages of manufacturing needles ; and, in each case, it is necessary to arrange them lengthwise or in a parallel direction. One would suppose, beforehand, that the picking out of twenty thousand needles entangled together, and forming, as it were, one great iron bur, and placing them all in a parallel direction, would be a formidable task, even for a week ; and, also, that the operator would need some insurance on the ends of his fingers, or be obliged to submit to a very uncomfortable species of blood-letting. But, by a simple and ingenious contrivance, aided by a little sleight of hand, the work is done in a few minutes. It is unnecessary to inquire, how much such ingenuity diminishes the price of needles, because, without it, there would be no needles at any price.

Not more than thirty years ago, it was uncommon for a glazier's apprentice, even after having served an apprenticeship of seven years, to be able to cut glass with a diamond, without spending much time, and destroying much of the glass upon which he worked. The invention of a simple tool, has put it in the power of the merest tyro in the trade, to cut glass, with facility and without loss. A man, who had a *mind as well as fingers*, observed that there was one direction in which the diamond was almost incapable of abrasion or wearing by use. The tool not only steadies the diamond, but fastens it in that direction.

The lathe, the old-fashioned spinning wheel, and the loom, by having a treadle for the foot, became equal to the addition of another hand to the workman.*

* "Without tools, that is, by the mere efforts of the human hand, there are, undoubtedly, multitudes of things which it would be impossible to make. Add to the human hand the rudest cutting instrument, and its powers are

The operation of tanning leather consists in exposing a hide to the action of a chemical ingredient called tannin, for a length of time sufficient to allow every particle of the hide to become saturated with the solution. In making the best leather, the hides used to lie in the pit for six, twelve, or eighteen months, and sometimes for two years;—the tanner being obliged to wait, all this time, for a return of his capital. By the modern process, the hides are placed in a close pit, with a solution of the tannin-matter; and the air being exhausted, the liquid penetrates through every pore and fibre of the skin, and the whole process is completed in a few days.

enlarged;—the fabrication of many things then becomes easy, and that of others possible, with great labor. Add the saw to the knife or the hatchet, and other works become possible, and a new course of difficult operations is brought into view, whilst many of the former are rendered easy. This observation is applicable even to the most perfect tools or machines. It would be possible for a very skilful workman, with files and polishing substances, to form a cylinder out of a piece of steel; but the time which this would require, would be so considerable, and the number of failures would, probably, be so great, that, for all practical purposes, such a mode of producing a steel cylinder might be said to be impossible. The same process, by the aid of the lathe and the sliding-rest, is the every-day employment of hundreds of workmen.”—*Babbage on the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures*.

“The earliest mode of cutting the trunks of a tree into planks, was by the use of the hatchet or the adze. It might, perhaps, be first split into three or four portions, and then each portion was reduced to a uniform surface by those instruments. With such means, the quantity of plank produced would, probably, not equal the quantity of the raw material wasted by the process; and, if the planks were thin, would certainly fall short of it. An improved tool, the saw, completely reverses the case. In converting a tree into thick planks, it causes the waste of a very small fractional part; and, even in reducing it to planks of only an inch in thickness, it does not waste more than an eighth part of the raw material. When the thickness of the plank is still further reduced, as is the case in cutting wood for veneering, the quantity of material destroyed again begins to bear a considerable proportion to that which is used; and hence, circular saws, having a very thin blade, have been employed for such purposes. In order to economize, still further, the more valuable woods, Mr. Brunel contrived a machine which, by a system of blades, cut off the veneer in a continuous shaving, thus rendering the whole of the piece of timber available.”—*Id.*

The bleaching of cloth, which used to be effected in the open air and in exposed situations where a temptation to theft was offered, (and in England, hundreds and probably thousands of men have yielded, and forfeited their lives,) is now performed in an unexposed situation, and in a manner so expeditious, that cloth is bleached as much more rapidly than it formerly was, as hides are tanned.

It is stated by Lord Brougham in his beautiful "Discourse on the Advantages of Science," that the inventor of the new mode of refining sugar, made more money in a shorter time, and with less risk and trouble, than perhaps was ever realized from any previous invention.

Intelligence, also, prevents loss, as well as makes profits. How much time and money have been squandered in repeated attempts to invent machinery, after a principle had been once tested, and had failed through some defect, inherent and natural, and therefore insuperable. Within thirty years, not less than five patents have been taken out, in England and the United States, for a certain construction of paddle-wheels for a steamboat, which construction was tested and condemned as early as 1810. A case once came within my own knowledge, of a man who spent a fortune in mining for coal, when a work on geology which would have cost but a dollar, and might have been read in a week, would have informed him that the stratum, where he began to excavate, belonged to a formation, lower down in the natural series than coal ever is, or according to the constitution of things, ever can be found. He therefore, worked into a stratum which must have been formed before a particle of coal, or even a tree, or a vegetable, existed on the planet.

These are a few specimens, on familiar subjects, taken almost at random, for the purpose of showing the inherent superiority of any association or community, whether small or great, where *mind* is a member of the partnership. What is true of the above mentioned cases, is true of the whole circle of those arts, by which human life is sustained, and human existence com-

forted, elevated and embellished. Mind has been the improver, for matter cannot improve itself; and improvement has advanced in proportion to the number and culture of the minds excited to activity and applied to the work. Similar advancements have been effected throughout the whole compass of human labor and research;—in the arts of Transportation and Locomotion, from the employment of the sheep and the goat, as beasts of burden, to the steam-engine and the rail-road car;—in the art of Navigation, from the canoe clinging timidly to the shore, to steamships which boldly traverse the ocean;—in Hydraulics, from carrying water by hand, in a vessel, or in horizontal aqueducts, to those vast conduits which supply the demands of a city, and to steam fire-engines which throw a column of water to the top of the loftiest buildings;—in the arts of Spinning and Rope-making, from the hand-distaff to the spinning frame, and to the machine which makes cordage or cables of any length, in a space ten feet square;—in Horology or Time-keeping, from the sun-dial and the water-clock, to the watch, and to the chronometer by which the mariner is assisted in measuring his longitude, and in saving property and life;—in the extraction, forging and tempering of Iron, and other ores, having malleability to be wrought into all forms, and used for all purposes, and supplying instead of the stone-hatchet or the fish-shell of the savage, an almost infinite variety of instruments, which have sharpness for cutting, or solidity for striking;—in the arts of Vitrification, or Glass-making, giving not only a multitude of commodious and ornamental utensils for the household, but substituting the window for the unsightly orifice or open casement, and winnowing light and warmth from the outward and the cold atmosphere;—in the arts of Induration by Heat, from bricks dried in the sun, to those which withstand the corrosion of our climate for centuries, or resist the intensity of the furnace;—in the arts of Illumination, from the torch cut from the fir or pine-tree, to the brilliant gas-light which gives almost a solar splendor to the nocturnal darkness of our cities;—in the arts of Heating and Ventilation, which at once supply warmth for

comfort and pure air for health ;—in the art of Building, from the hollowed trunk of a tree, or the roof-shaped cabin, to those commodious and lightsome dwellings which betoken the taste and competence of our villages and cities ;—in the art of Copying or Printing, from the toilsome process of hand-copying, where the transcription of a single book was the labor of months or years, and sometimes almost of a life, to the power-printing press, which throws off sixty printed sheets in a minute ;—in the art of Paper-making, from the preparation of the inner bark of a tree, cleft off, and dried at immense labor, to the machinery of Fourdrinier, from which there jets out an unbroken stream of paper with the velocity and continuousness of a current of water ;—and, in addition to all these, in the arts of Modelling and Casting ; of Designing, Engraving and Painting ; of Preserving materials and of Changing their color, of Dividing and Uniting them, &c. &c.,—an ample catalogue, whose very names and processes would fill columns.

Now, for the perfecting of all these operations, from the tedious and bungling process, to the rapid and elegant ;—for the change of an almost infinite variety of crude and worthless materials into useful and beautiful fabrics, *mind* has been the agent. Succeeding generations have outstripped their predecessors, just in proportion to the superiority of their mental cultivation. When we compare different people or different generations with each other, the diversity is so great that all must behold it. But, there is the same kind of difference between contemporaries, fellow-townsmen, and fellow-laborers. Though the uninstructed man works side by side with the intelligent, yet, the mental difference between them, places them in the same relation to each other, that a past age bears to the present. If the ignorant man knows no more respecting any particular art or branch of business, than was generally known during the last century, he belongs to the last century ; and he must consent to be outstripped by those who have the light and knowledge of the present. Though they are engaged in the same kind of work, though they are supplied with the

same tools or implements for carrying it on, yet, so long as one has only an arm, but the other has an arm and a mind, their products will come out stamped and labelled, all over, with marks of contrast ;—superiority and inferiority, both as to quantity and quality, will be legibly written on their respective labors. It is related by travellers among savage tribes, that when, by the help of any ingeniously-devised instrument or apparatus, they have performed some skilful manual operation, the savages have purloined from them the instrument they had used, supposing there was some magic in the apparatus itself, by which the seeming miracle had been performed ; but, as they could not steal the art of the operator with the implement which he employed, the theft was fruitless. Any person who expects to effect, with less education, what another is enabled to do, with more, ought not to smile at the delusion of the savage, or the simplicity of his reasoning.

On a cursory inspection of the great works of art,—the steam engine, the printing press, the power loom, the mill, the iron foundry, the ship, the telescope, &c. &c.,—we are apt to look upon them as having sprung into sudden existence, and reached their present state of perfection by one, or at most by a few, mighty efforts of creative genius. We do not reflect that they have required the lapse of centuries, and the successive application of thousands of minds, for the attainment of their present excellence ; that they have advanced from a less to a more perfect form, by steps and gradations almost as imperceptible as the growth by which an infant expands to the stature of a man ; and that, as later discoverers and inventors had first to go over the ground of *their* predecessors, so must future discoverers and inventors first master the attainments of the present age, before they will be prepared to make those new achievements which are to carry still further onward the stupendous work of improvement.

Amongst a people, then, who must gain their subsistence by their labor, what can be so economical, so provident and farsighted, and even so wise,—in a lawful and laudable, though

not in the highest sense of that word,—as to establish, and, with open heart and hand, to endow and sustain the most efficient system of Universal Education for their children ; and, where the material bounties of nature are comparatively narrow and stinted, to explore, in their stead, those exhaustless and illimitable resources of comfort and competency and independence, which lie hidden in the yet dormant powers of the human intellect ?

But, notwithstanding all I have said of the value of education, in a pecuniary sense, and of its power to improve and elevate the outward domestic and social condition of all men, yet, in closing this report, I should do injustice to my feelings, did I abstain from declaring that to my own mind, this tribute to its worth, however well deserved, is still the faintest note of praise which can be uttered, in honor of so noble a theme ;—and that, however deserving of attention may be the *economical* view of the subject which I have endeavored to present, yet it is one that dwindles into insignificance when compared with those loftier and more sacred attributes of the cause, which have the power of converting material wealth into spiritual well-being, and of giving to its possessor lordship and sovereignty, alike over the temptations of adversity, and the still more dangerous seducements of prosperity,—and which, —so far as human agency is concerned,—must be looked to for the establishment of peace and righteousness upon earth, and for the enjoyment of glory and happiness in heaven.

HORACE MANN,

Secretary of the Board of Education.

Boston, January 1, 1842.

APPENDIX.

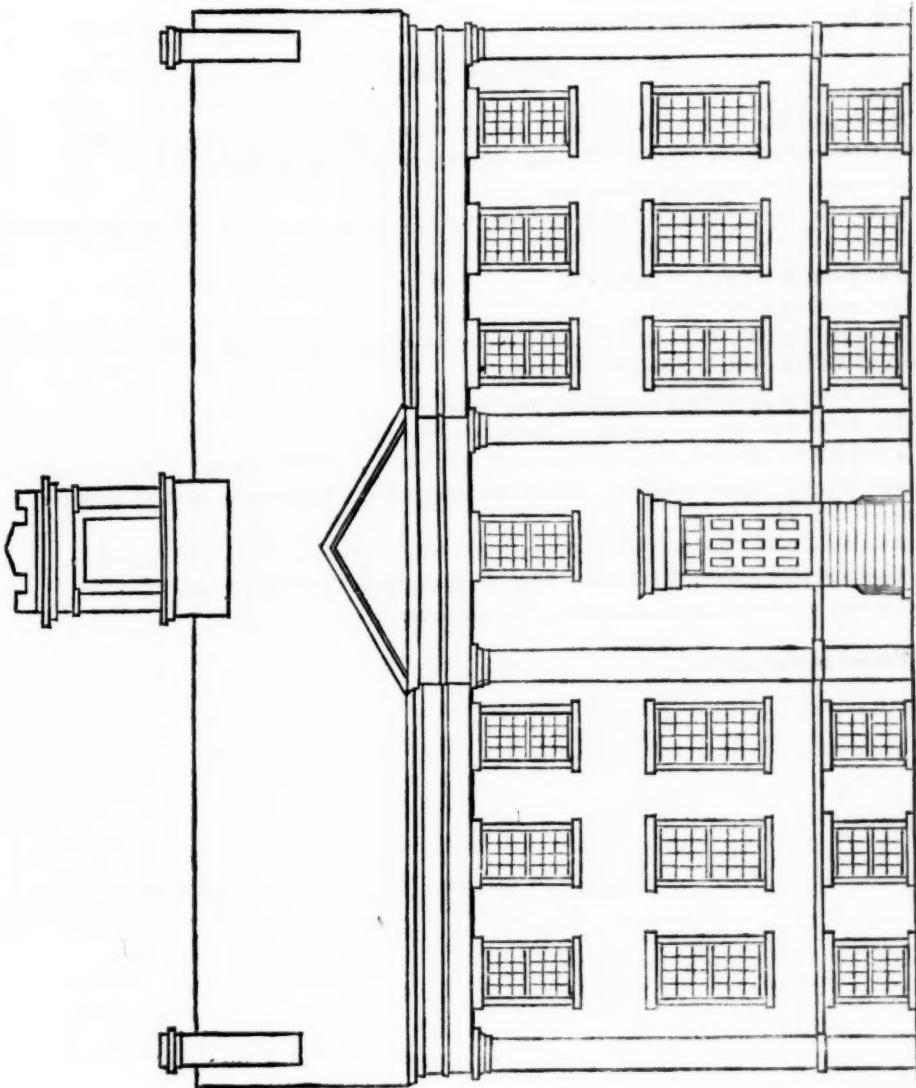


FIGURE 1. CABOTVILLE SCHOOLHOUSE, SPRINGFIELD, MASS. *Front Elevation.*
Scale 1-16 inch to a foot.

CABOTVILLE SCHOOLHOUSE, SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

Referred to, page 31.

Fig. 1, page 121, Front Elevation.

Fig. 2, " 123, Lower Schoolroom.

EXPLANATION.

A—Porch.

B—Schoolroom for 198 scholars, each accommodated with a separate seat and desk.

C, C—Front edge of teacher's platform, which is raised 8 inches above the floor.

D—Room for library, apparatus, &c.

E, E—Recitation rooms. The floors of D, and of E E, are on a level with the platform.

The house is of brick, 48 feet by 72.

The porch is 13 feet by 18.

The height of the basement story is 8 feet ; of the second story 12 feet ; and of the upper story 13 1-2 feet,—all in the clear.

Each room is provided with sufficient ventilators.

The floors are double to prevent transmission of sounds.

The windows have caps and sills of chiselled stone, are provided with blinds, and the sashes are hung with weights. Those in front have 24 lights each, of best Saranac glass,—10 × 14.

An interstice of 2 inches is left in the walls to prevent dampness on the interior surface.

Yard and play-ground, 1 1-8 acre. Near the schoolhouse is a well of good water.

The upper schoolroom is substantially like the lower.

Estimated cost, \$10,000.

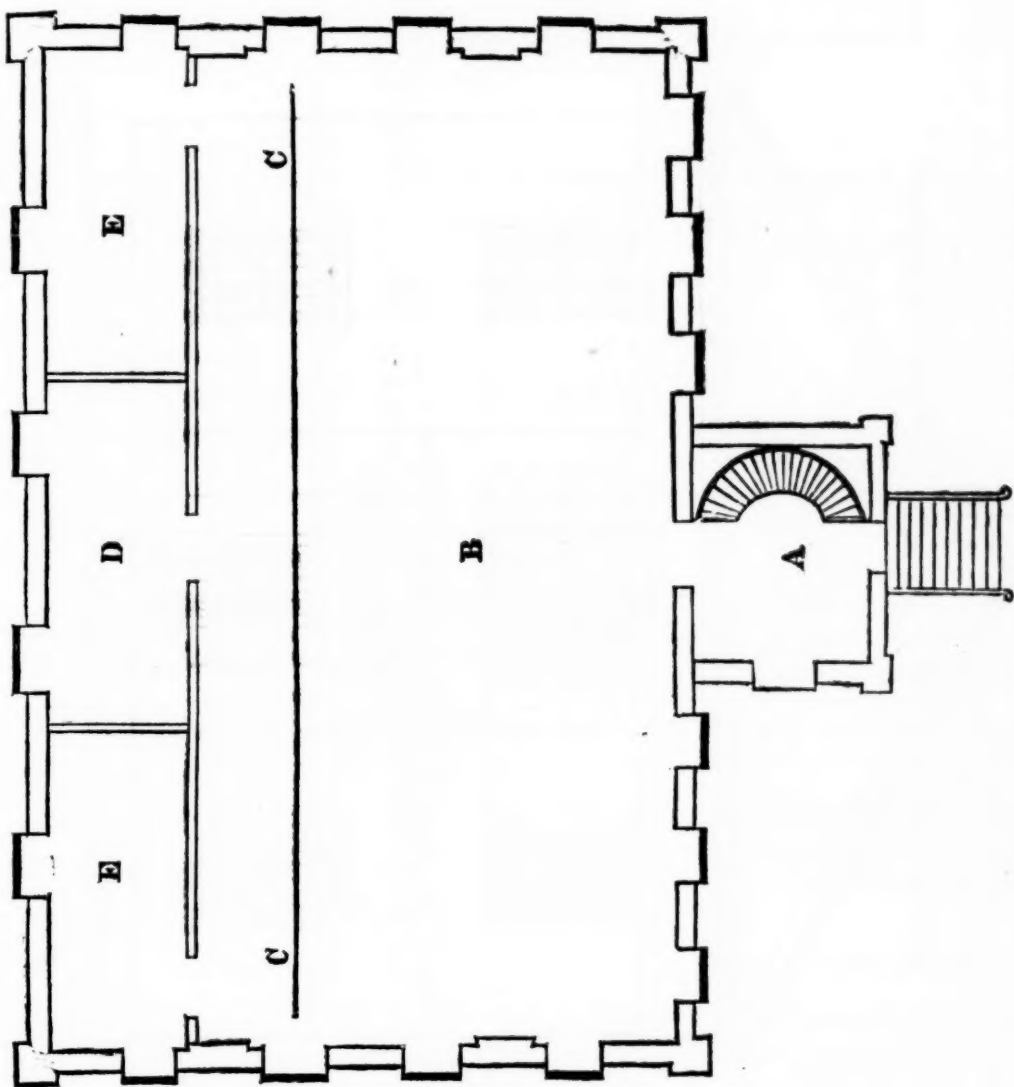


FIGURE 2. *Plan of Lower Schoolroom.* Scale 1-16 inch to a foot.

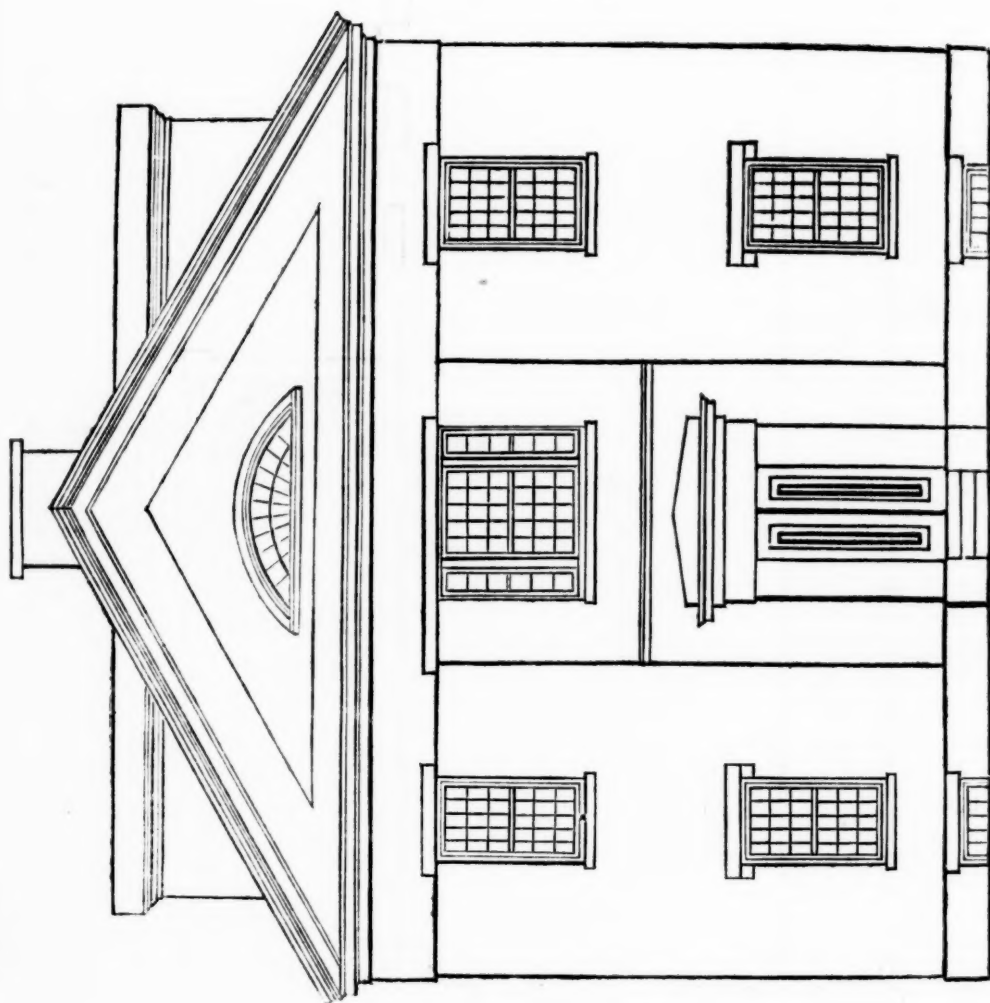


FIGURE 1. LOWELL HIGH SCHOOLHOUSE. *End Elevation.*

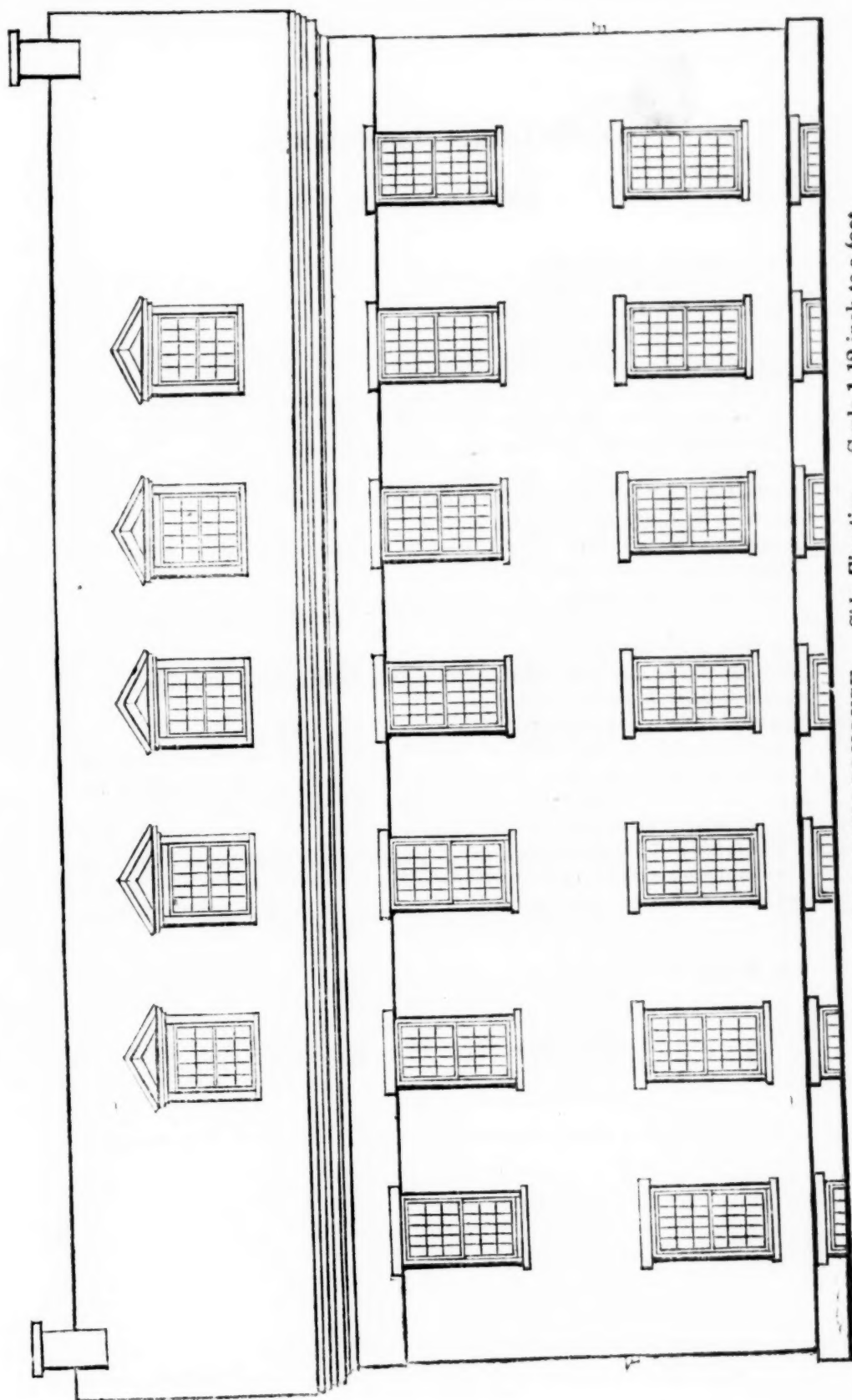


FIGURE 2. LOWELL HIGH SCHOOLHOUSE. Side Elevation. Scale 1-12 inch to a foot.

LOWELL HIGH SCHOOLHOUSE.

Referred to, page 32.

Fig. 1, page 124, End Elevation.

Fig. 2, " 125, Side Elevation.

Fig. 3, " 127, Lower Schoolroom.

A, A—Entrances at the ends.

B, B—Entries, provided with hooks, &c., for hats, bonnets and outer garments.

Cb, Cb—Single desks and seats.

E, E—Teacher's platform, 6 1-2 feet wide, raised 6 inches above the floor.

F—Teacher's desk.

G, G—Aisle, nearly 4 feet in width, all around the schoolroom.

H—Room for library, apparatus, &c.

I—Recitation room.

J, J—Stairways to second story.

K—Hot air pipe from furnace.

The house is of brick, 84 feet by 48.

Each pupil has an area on the floor, for desk and seat, of more than 16 square feet.

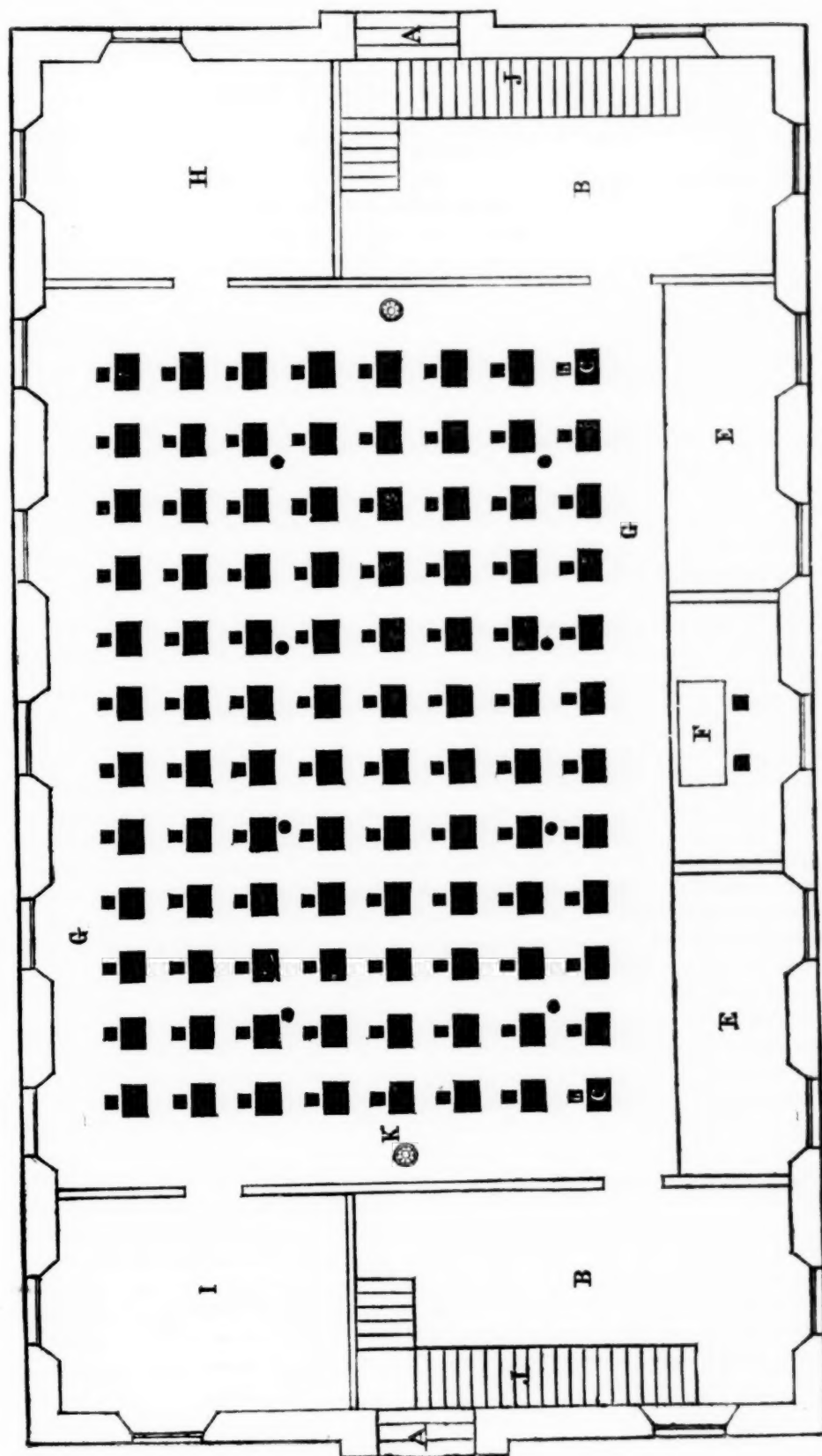
Height of rooms, 14 1-2 feet, in the clear.

The second floor is very similar to the first.

The attic is excellently fitted up for a writing department, the seats being placed longitudinally, and opposite to them a blackboard, extending nearly the whole length of the room.

The lot, on which the schoolhouse stands, contains between 3-8ths and 1-2 an acre. It is divided into two parts, furnishing yard and play-ground for the sexes respectively. The boys enter at one end, and the girls at the other. The house has two fronts, each facing a broad street, so that the males and females approach and leave the school by different streets.

Cost, \$18,523 84.

FIGURE 3. *Lower Schoolroom.* Scale 1-12 inch to a foot.

EAST SCHOOLHOUSE, IN SALEM.

Referred to, page 31.

Fig. 1, page 133, First Story.

Fig. 2, " 135, Second Story.

DESCRIPTION.

The exterior dimensions of the building are 136 by 50 feet. The schoolrooms are 65 by 36 feet each,—the space in front of the desks 65 by 4 1-2 feet,—the space occupied by the desks 59 by 25 feet,—the space in rear of the desks 65 by 6 1-2 feet, the floor of which is raised 8 inches above the floor of the rooms,—the side aisles are 3 feet, and all the other aisles 18 inches in width.

The desks are so placed that the scholars sit with their faces towards the partition which separates the schoolroom from the recitation rooms, the light being thus admitted in their rear, and on one side.

The desks are 4 feet in length, and of four sizes in width, the two front ranges being 16 inches, the two next 15, the two next 14, and the two next 13. The desks are also of four sizes in height,—the two front ranges being on the lower side 27 inches, the two next 26, the two next 25, the two next 24.

The chairs are also of four sizes,—those in the two front ranges being 12 by 12 1-2 inches in the seat, (i. e. extreme width, the sides being of the usual shape of chairs,) and 16 inches in height, and those in the succeeding ranges being reduced in height in proportion to the desks, and also varying proportionally in the dimensions of the seats.

The recitation rooms are 18 by 10 feet. The schoolrooms and recitation rooms are 15 feet in height.

Upon the front edge of the raised platform, in the rear of the desks, settees are placed, which are of the same length as the desks, and are placed in corresponding positions, with intervening spaces in continuation of the aisles. The settees are placed with the back towards the desks, and are designed exclusively for the use of classes attending reviews before the principals. The settees in width and height correspond to the largest size of chairs, and are constructed of the same materials and finished in the same style.

In the centre and at the extremities of the range of settees, are placed tables, (of 4 by 2 1-2 feet, oval shape,) which are occupied by the assistants during general exercises, when the station of the principal is in front of the desks, the middle one being used by the principal when attending reviews.

Each recitation room is appropriated to a single course of study, as marked upon the plan, and is therefore used exclusively by one assistant. Three sides of the room are appropriated to seats, being lined with cherry wood, (oiled and varnished,) to a height reaching above the heads of the scholars. The lining is projected at the bottom, so as to furnish inclined backs to the seats, which are constructed of cherry wood, 13 inches in width, 2 inches thick, with hollowed top and rounded edge, supported on turned legs, the height being 15 1-4 inches from the top of the seat to the floor. The fourth side of the room, opposite the window, is occupied by a black-board of 3 feet in width, which extends across the space upon each side of the door.

The desks in each schoolroom are placed in ranges, each range containing 11 desks, and each desk being fitted for two scholars,—so that 176 scholars may be received in each department, or 352 in the whole school. The desks are constructed like tables, with turned legs, narrow rails, inclined top, and a shelf beneath. The legs and rails are of birch, stain-

ed and varnished, and the tops of cherry, oiled and varnished. The legs are secured in the floor by tenons. The tables of the teachers are constructed and finished like the desks of the scholars.

The chairs are constructed with seats of bass wood, and cherry backs,—the seats and backs hollowed, and the seats resting on wooden pedestals, secured to the floor by tenons and screws.

All the spaces between the doors and windows upon the four sides of the schoolrooms are occupied by black-boards. In the spaces between the windows upon the rear, recesses have been constructed, which are fitted with book-shelves, and are closed by means of covers in front, which are raised and lowered by weights and pulleys. These covers are black-boards, and are so finished as to represent sunken pannels. Drawers are constructed beneath the black-boards to receive the sponges, chalk, &c.

Circular ventilators are placed in the ceiling of each schoolroom and recitation room, three in each schoolroom of three feet in diameter, and one in each recitation room of two feet in diameter. These ventilators are solid covers of wood, hung with hinges over apertures of corresponding size, and raised or lowered by means of cords passing over pulleys, through the ceiling into the room below, the cords terminating in loops, which are fastened to hooks in the side of the room. When the ventilators are raised the impure air escapes into the garret, the ventilation of which is also provided for by means of the circular windows in the gable ends, which turn on pivots in the centre, and are opened or shut by cords passing over pulleys in the same manner as the ventilators.

Each schoolroom is warmed by a furnace, placed directly under the centre of the space in front of the desks, the hot air ascending through a circular aperture of 2 feet in diameter, which is represented upon the plan. The smoke pipe, (of galvanized iron,) is conducted upward through the centre of this aperture, and thence, after passing a considerable distance in the schoolroom, through one of the recitation rooms into the chimney, which is built in the centre of the front wall. The recitation rooms are warmed by means of apertures at the top and bottom respectively of the partitions which separate them from the schoolrooms, which being open together, secure a rapid equalization of temperature in all the rooms. These apertures are fitted to be closed, with revolving shutters above and shutters hung on hinges below.

In the partition wall between the schoolrooms is a clock, having two faces, and thus indicating the hour to the occupants of each room. The clock strikes at the end of each half hour. In the ante-rooms, (marked F. F. on the plan Fig. 1,) are hooks for caps, overcoats, &c. In each of these rooms, also, there are a pump and sink.

The lot on which the house stands extends from Essex street to Bath street. There is a sufficient passage-way on each side of the house, and access from each street. The north end faces the common, which affords the most ample play-ground, always open.

The proportional expense of that part of the building which is appropriated to school purposes is estimated at \$12,500.

RULES AND REGULATIONS, EAST SCHOOL, SALEM.

This school shall be under the charge of two male principals, and six female assistants.

The school shall be open for boys belonging, &c., residing, &c., who shall bring the certificate required to be furnished to such scholars as have passed a satisfactory examination in the studies pursued in the primary schools, or who, if previously educated at private schools, shall, upon examination by the principals, be deemed qualified for admission.

The school shall be divided into two departments, to be denominated respectively, (from the location of the schoolrooms,) the north and south departments.

Each department shall be divided into eight classes, and each class shall consist, as nearly as may be, of twenty-two members. The classes in the north department shall be called and numbered *north first* to *north eighth* inclusive, and the classes in the south department shall be called and numbered *south first* to *south eighth* inclusive.

The studies in the north department shall be divided into three courses, viz: 1. Grammar. 2. Reading, *first course*. 3. Reading, *second course*.

The studies in the south department shall be divided into three courses, viz: 1. Geography. 2. Arithmetic, *first course*. 3. Arithmetic, *second course*.

The course in grammar shall include the study of orthography and etymology for the younger classes, and of syntax and prosody for the older classes. Every lesson, as far as may be, shall be accompanied by operations on the black-board and slates; and exercises in parsing and composition shall be required from the older classes.

[Books prescribed.]

The first course in reading shall comprise instruction in reading, spelling, defining and punctuation, so far as these several branches may be connected with the reading lessons. The second course in reading shall comprise instruction preparatory to the first, and, so far as practicable, in the same branches. In spelling, the scholars shall be constantly required to write words upon the black-board as well as to spell orally.

The course in geography shall include the study of the elementary and higher text books, the use of maps and globes, the construction of maps, and if practicable, the elements of astronomy, and a short course in history.

The first course in arithmetic shall include the higher branches of mental and practical arithmetic, constant operations on slates and black-board, book-keeping, and if practicable, the elements of algebra and geometry. The second course shall include the lower branches of mental and practical arithmetic, and simpler operations on slates and black-board.

The courses in grammar and geography shall be attended by *all* the classes in both departments, each class being required to prepare and perform two recitations and one review, in each study during every week.

The first courses in reading and arithmetic shall be attended by the *four older classes* in each department, each class being required to prepare and perform four recitations and one review in each study during every week.

The second courses in reading and arithmetic shall be attended by the *four younger classes* in each department, each class being required to prepare and perform four recitations and one review in each study during every week.

The six assistants shall be respectively assigned to the six courses into which the studies are divided; and each assistant shall be exclusively employed in attending recitations in the course assigned, being required to attend thirty two recitations during every week.

The principals shall be respectively assigned to the two departments into which the school is divided, and shall be employed in reviewing, in the studies of their respective depart-

ments, all the classes belonging to both departments,—the principal of the north department reviewing every class in each department once during every week in grammar and reading, and the principal of the south department reviewing every class in each department once during every week in geography and arithmetic,—each principal being thus required to attend thirty-two reviews during every week.

The reviews in grammar and reading shall be attended by the classes in one department at the same time that the reviews in geography and arithmetic are attended by the corresponding classes in the other department; each principal devoting the first half of the week to the classes in his own department, and the last half to the classes in the other department.

The classes shall attend recitations in the recitation rooms occupied by the respective assistants, each recitation room being assigned to one assistant exclusively, and furnished with fixtures and apparatus appropriate to the course of studies pursued in it.

The classes shall attend reviews in the schoolrooms occupied by the respective principals, at the stations in the rear of the desks designed for this purpose.

The time devoted to the preparation and also to the performance of each review and recitation shall be precisely half an hour, as indicated by the striking of the school clock.

The movements of the classes, in proceeding to and from the several recitation rooms and review stations, shall be regulated by such a method as will prevent confusion and require but little time, and will at the same time afford an agreeable and salutary recreation.

The scholars shall be seated at the desks in such a manner that the two occupants of one desk shall never remain together during the time allotted to recitations and reviews. For this purpose the members of the first and second classes in each department shall occupy the first and second ranges of desks in their respective schoolrooms, a member of each class being seated at each desk. The members of the third and fourth classes shall in like manner occupy the third and fourth ranges,—the members of the fifth and sixth classes the fifth and sixth ranges,—and the members of the seventh and eighth classes the seventh and eighth ranges.

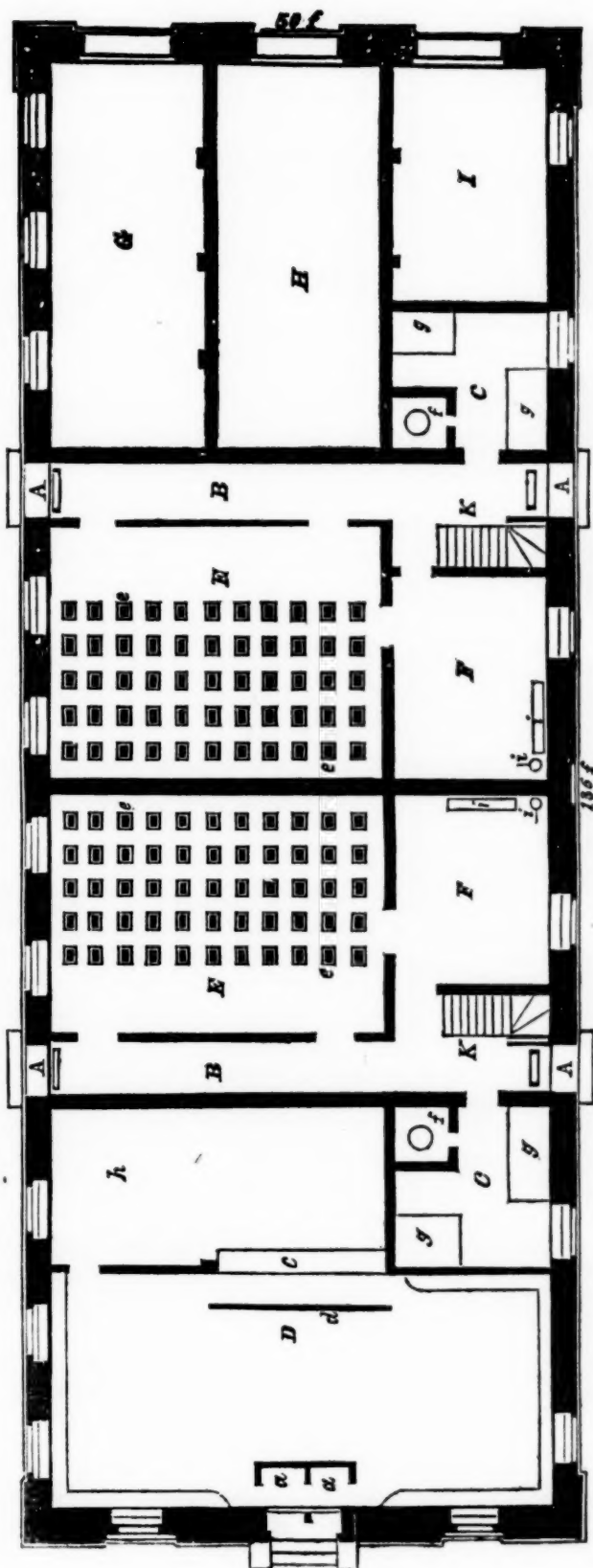
The time of weekly attendance consisting of fifty-six half hours in winter, and sixty half hours in summer, the arrangement of exercises shall be such as that during the winter term thirty-two half hours shall be appropriated to reviews and recitations, eight to writing, six to opening exercises and the daily business of the school, and ten to recess and general exercises in the schoolroom, such as singing, the simultaneous rehearsal of rules and tables, arithmetical and grammatical exercises upon the black-board and slates, drawing, &c.; with no other variation during the summer term than that the four additional half hours, at the close of the afternoon, shall be appropriated to general exercises, especially to declamation, under the direction of the principal of the north department, and the construction of maps, under the direction of the principal of the south department.

The entire course of exercises in the school shall be conformed to the annexed synopsis;* the same exercises recurring on the same days in each week, the recitations immediately preceding the review in each course of studies, and the reviews and recitations in the several studies being preserved uniformly equidistant throughout.

The principals shall have the sole oversight of the scholars occupying desks in their respective schoolrooms, in respect to discipline. All misdemeanors occurring during the recitations shall be reported by the assistants to the principals, who shall thus have the oversight of the delinquents; but misdemeanors occurring during reviews may be corrected, as the case shall require, by the principal who is at the time conducting the review.

* The synopsis divides the school-time of the week into half hours, and assigns to the teachers their respective duties during each half hour.

FIGURE 1. EAST SCHOOLHOUSE, SALEM. *First Story. Scale 1-20 inch to a foot.*



A, A, A, A—School entrances.

B, B—Passages, five feet wide

C, C—Furnace and fuel-rooms, 15 by 13 feet.

E, E—Primary schools, 36.6 by 24.3 feet.

c. e—Seats in primary schoolrooms.

F, F—Ante-rooms, 15 by 19 feet.

K, K—Stairs to second story.

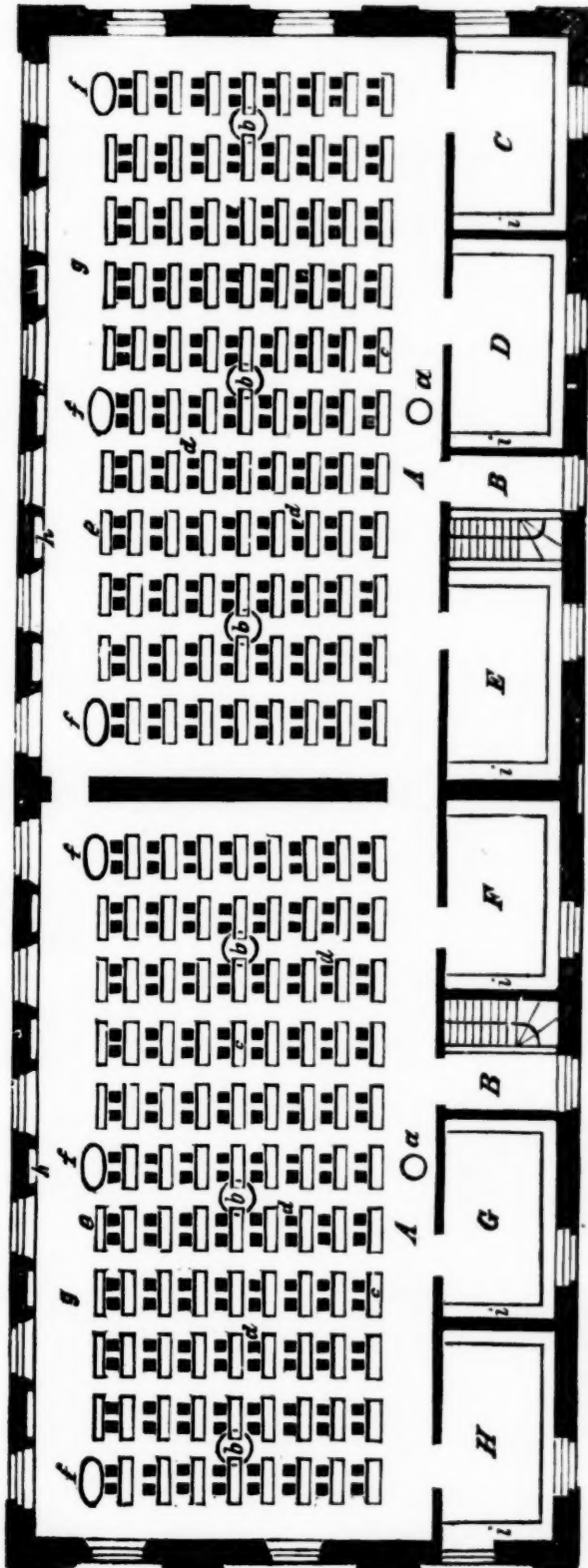
f-furnaces.

e. g.—Fuel and ash bins.

iii. i. i.—Pumps and sinks.

The other apartments in the lower story are occupied for various city purposes, which it is unnecessary here to specify.

FIGURE 2. EAST SCHOOLHOUSE, SALEM. Second Story. Scale 1-20 inch to a foot.



A, A—Schoolrooms, 65 by 36 feet each.

B, B—Entries and stairs from the first story.

C—Recitation room for readings, first course, 17 by 10 feet.

D— " " " grammar, " 18 by 10 "

E— " " " reading, second course, 19 by 10 feet.

F— " " " arithmetic, " 19 by 10 "

G— " " " geography, 18 by 10 feet.

H— " " " arithmetic, first course, 17 by 10 feet.

a, a—Hot air entrances.

b, b, &c.—Ventilators, 3 feet diameter, in the upper ceilings of the rooms.

c, c—Desks.

d, d—Seats.

e, e—Settees.

f, f, &c.—Tables for instructors.

g, g—Platform raised 8 inches above floor of rooms.

h, h—Recesses containing books.

i, i—Seats occupying three sides of recitation rooms.